The next meeting of

THE CLUB

will be held

February 10, 2014

Paper by

LAWRENCE JORDAN

200 Laurel Street
6pm Cocktails
7pm Dinner

Please RSVP to Host
Wesley Moore
wezmo@aol.com (415) 606-4465

The Club Dinner

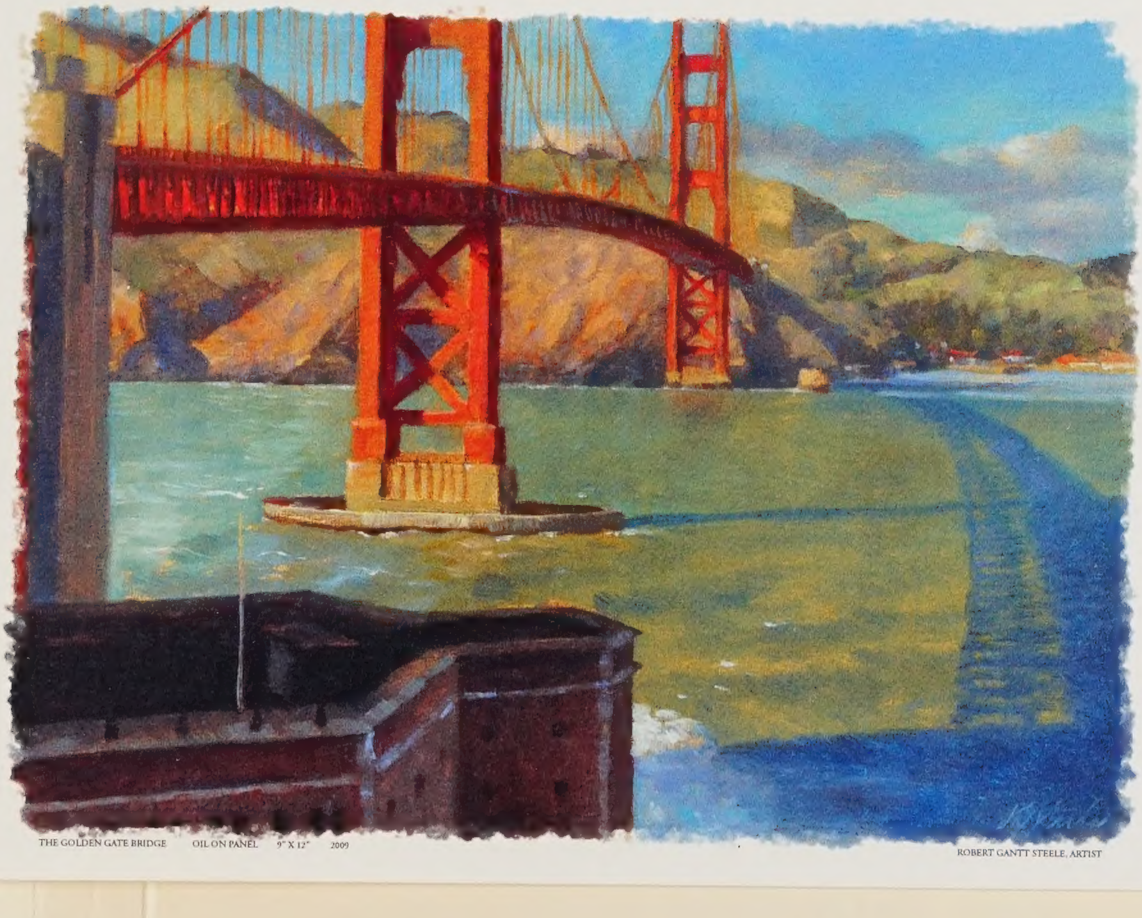
Tuesday 6pm
October 9, 2012

The Pacific Union Club
1000 California St
San Francisco, CA

Paper by Charles Hobson

Hosted by Barrett Weber

RSVP: barretthweber@gmail.com



THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE OIL ON PANEL 9" X 12" 2009

ROBERT GANTT STEELE, ARTIST

You are cordially invited
to a meeting of The Club

December 10, 2012
6 pm

Bruce Sams
88 Lagoon Rd
Belvedere

Paper: Member Jordan

the club

Will hold its next meeting at the

Left Bank Restaurant

April 8, 2013

~ ◆ ~

Affability Hour

6:00 P.M.

Dinner

7:00 P.M.

~ ◆ ~

Paper by

Sam Hamm

The Left Bank Restaurant is located at 507 Magnolia Avenue
Larkspur, CA 94939 • Tel: (415) 927-3331

RSVP to host Bennington • E-mail: jlbenn@pacbell.net, or
Tel: (415) 435-7706 • If no answer, please leave a message

BRUCE and KING SAMS   88 LAGOON ROAD   BELVEDERE CA 94920

Chez Michele

Club Dinner

Monday September 10, 2012

First Course

Four Citrus Sea Scallop w/ Cucumber Ceviche

Salad

Mixed Greens
Point Reyes Blue Cheese, Candied Pecans
Balsamic Vinaigrette

Fresh Artesian Baked Breads & Butter

Entrée

Beef Bourguignon
Caramelized Onion & Fennel Mashed Potatoes
Braised Baby Kale

Dessert & Coffee Station

Mini Lemon Tarts, Chocolate Éclairs,
Crème Puffs, Coffee Noyer Cake, & Raspberry Squares

You are cordially invited
to a meeting
of the Club
Monday, January 13, 2014
88 Lagoon Rd
Belvedere

Cocktails 6 pm
dinner 7 pm
Paper by member Bennington
Please respond to bsamsmd@pacbell.net
or 415 435 5702

Minutes of Sept meeting

Bill Prezant

no bennington
no Nion Maavog

Dave Pettus host, his birthday
at his library

Barrett
Jamie
Bruce Sams
Sam Hams
Wesmo
Larry Jordon
Philip Pables
David Pettus
Bill Prezant
Chuck Hobson

Paper Bruce Sams
the King James Bible's story from a personal + historical points of view

old to 1800 BC, written 900 BC 500 BC
new testament in everyday greek + aramaic
50 AD, 70 AD ... next 150 years
Latin translation
1380 first english translation from latin
tyndal in late 1400's then burned
puritans wanted simpler
King James wanted a less puritan
54 person committee
6 years, from translations + ~~orig~~ + Greek + ~~heb~~ hebrew

Chuck Hobson wants to go sailing

Same time as Shakespeare, published 1611
Poetry, parallelism, metaphors ...

"The bible has a long history of contact with man"

A Meeting of The Club
at
The Library of David W. Pettus
2253 Union Street #101
San Francisco, CA

Directions to:
126 Trinidad Drive
Tiburon, CA

1. From Hwy 101, exit onto Tiburon Blvd
2. Turn right at the signal and travel East on Tiburon Blvd through two signals to Trestle Glen
3. Turn left onto Trestle Glen, and proceed through the stop sign at the top of the hill
4. Turn left at the fire station onto Paradise Drive
5. Continue on aprox. 1.5 miles to Paradise Cay
6. Turn right down into Paradise Cay on Antilles, and turn right onto Trinidad Dr.
7. 126 Trinidad is on the left, aprox. 1.5 blocks, though there is not a cross street

Monday, November 11th, 2013
Cocktails, 6 p.m.
Dinner, 7 p.m.
Paper by Member Weber
8 p.m.
R.S.V.P. dwpettus@gmail.com

Brewster

YOU ARE INVITED

To

A Meeting of the club

Hosted by James E. Sherman & Family

March 10, 2014

Six O'clock for Seven

126 Trinidad Drive
Tiburon, CA

Paper by Your Host

If you haven't, RSVP to:
james@campsherman.com

Jamie

"Dirt"

A Paper for the club

March 10, 2014

James E. Sherman

Dirt
3/10/14

Noak & Gordon in the Garden

Noak is sitting at the head of the wrought iron garden table, his nose just clearing the edge. Wispy blonde curls top an otherwise baldhead, though sitting without a shirt he is comfortable. The Portland garden is shady, with fully opened crimson roses hanging over the back of the chair. Wide cherubic cheeks frame a bright smile as he looks up to Gordon.

Gordon, given his years, wears a practical wide-brimmed brown felt hat. He gazes down on the little boy; his hand outstretched holding the object of their conversation. In a loose white t-shirt, Gordon's long arm shows the gentle sign of age; no longer firm, but with loose marked skin where forearms once bulged. Noak's frame is graced with baby fat that stretches his skin. Though four generations separate these kindred men, they are absorbed in each other... oblivious of the rest of the family across the patio.

"Dirt" announces Noak with enthusiasm.

Gordon asks "Do you like dirt?"

"Yes, dirt!" responds the boy.

"Me too; I like dirt too" encourages the nonagenarian, transfixed in the happy gaze of his youngest progeny.

Noak adds more dirt to Gordon's palm, who rolls it into the existing pile with a gentle sweep of his long thumb.

Noak is excited, his whole life ahead...every experience new and raw. Gordon spends his time now reflecting on his family, his deceased wife, and those around him. He lives in the moment.

They both like dirt.

As the dirt falls through their fingers, and then through the open weave of the table, it lands on the ground. Held by each, and returned to the garden, it makes a sacred place for this, their last time together.

Simplicity and Complications

As life moves on, it becomes more complicated. Dirt is explained to the young as being "soil". In the school garden, Noak has come to appreciate that the soil in which he plants his vegetable seeds is not "just dirt". This is confusing. Dirt is no longer dirt; why did his Dad tell him that dirt is dirt? Now dirt is composed of smelly cow poop, soft spongy compost, and pieces of wood and twigs. The stuff in the garden beds is darker than his dry dirt, and wetter. It feels slightly warm.

Noak's soil is alive. Containing microorganisms, nutrient minerals and organic matter, it is the essence of life itself. Throughout the world, productive dirt has supported civilizations, and many of them have exploited it to exhaustion, leading to their own downfalls. Even today, farming on selenium-laced ground with massive irrigation schemes has denuded the land and left the livelihoods of workers in jeopardy. Husbanding the dirt is a global challenge; Noak will learn this, as his understanding becomes broader, and life becomes more complicated.

Sifting Dirt

Grab some dirt and a few screens of increasingly smaller mesh. Toss in the dirt and begin sifting into the next screen. With each [level] of disaggregation, the constituent elements of the handful reveal themselves.

What do you see?
Pebbles… tiny boulders of solid rock, some with sharp edges, as if broken from a larger whole. Others beautifully rounded… in the microscopic river that is wet dirt, rain, and physical tumbling.

There is glass; it may be sea glass. Chards of green and white; sometimes blue, if your in the right place. Worn and weathered, it was once part of something bigger. Utilitarian in its service as a window or bottle; maybe beer from a long time past, or a '60's soda.

Slivers of wood tangle in the mesh, jutting out at sharp angles, on their way to becoming minerals again. Cellulose mixes with dry elements to add bulk and retains moisture in the dirt.

Dried leaves are shattered in the dirt. No longer green and supple, their veins hold together the thin crisp shards of what was once vegetative life.

Gordon's Life - Complication

A child of the depression, Gordon's earliest memories were those of dirt-encrusted men's overalls and tattered trench coats. Not that these men would have allowed this state of affairs in their recent pasts. The cost of staying clean was too much when food and warmth were the eroded necessities of a downtrodden world.

A bright light in the otherwise dour world was a little girl - Shirley Temple. Her movies inspired Gordon that there was a [more positive attitude] to develop. Always seeking to help her adults find a more congenial solution, quick to launch into a message-laden song, the girl on the screen transcended the complexities that he faced.

Gordon came of age in World War Two. As his neighbors did, he served in the war.

Overseas…
Dirt was dark sand,
Dry powder that blew into every seam of clothing, or
Frost-hardened – covered in snow and blood

Digging into this dirt was a laborious act of self-defense. Foxholes and sandbags were crafted from the dirt of the battlefield. Bullets and shells flying overhead caused men to hug the dirt around them, while their minds groped for sanity. Rising out of the dirt, there was the long exhaled breath of relief of being alive. Dusting off the dirt, they made promises to live a better life. Appreciation swelled through bodies, loosening the dirty fear.

Coming home, there were a lot of adjustments. It took some time for the war to move from the front of Gordon's mind and become replaced with more current experiences. He began his career and started a family. Life became busy and increasingly complex. There were days when the "dirt hit the fan". Engineering consumed his time, with challenge of putting a roof over the heads of his young brood. Life seemed messy in the moment.

The years rolled forward like a cyclone in the desert; whirling...vision obstructed by the stinging detritus. Gordon reads the morning paper and watches the evening news. There is always a lot to explain to his growing children. Senator McCarthy had the dirt on his enemies... Gordon learned that life wasn't always fair. The civil rights movement is a challenge; his kids don't understand how the country could be so different. The assassinations of good men are incomprehensible. In black and white these events play out and the streets are burning. Walter Cronkite reports from the wet jungles of Vietnam; soldiers covered in dirt. Happily, Ed Sullivan appears every Sunday night over dinner in their laps. Together they watch Elvis, the Beatles, and Topo Gigio.

The complexities of life were synthesized by getting out into the garden, and outdoors as a family. Hours of working the dirt cleansed his mind and brought perspective on work and hearth. Walking as a family provided the quiet stretching of muscles, untangling the unfelt cramps in his body, and moments of bliss watching his children at play.

Gordon spent his life as an engineer; building roads and civil structures. He has a long career delving into gravels, cements, binders, loams and geology. Gordon has forgotten more about these topics than most people know. Now he doesn't care, as he once did. Not that [his life's work wasn't a source of great pride and satisfaction; but, that his mind has moved to a more calm and ethereal place.

The amount of dirt that Mount St. Helens throws into the air still impresses him...

Noak's Garden

Noak lives in a garden much of the time. Behind the house, it opens from a rock patio slightly uphill into a tangled mass of overgrown plants to where the sun goes down. In between, there are rows of vegetables in black dirt. The dirt sticks together like clay at school. Around the vegetables stand small citrus trees and flowering bushes against either wooden fence. His parents dig the dirt when it starts to be warmer, and mound it up into straight rows. Then… they all plant little plants and seeds. Now it's time to get the hose and spray everything. As the sun drops over the far fence, everyone is tired and muddy. Time for a bath, or shower with daddy.

On days alone, the backyard is Noak's kingdom. As what seemed dangerous in the past, it's now his to explore. The wild roses climbing up the big trees have white, red, and pink flowers. The smell of jasmine is in the air. Between the old fruit trees and the fence it is dark and dank. Mold covers the wooden slats, sliding off when he wipes his hand down the narrow boards. Under his bare feet, the mucky leaves and dead stuff is wet and smells. The garden is giving its detritus to the dirt, but he doesn't know that yet. He likes the squishing of dirt between his toes. Mommy and Daddy wipe it off before he goes into the house, delaying his next thing to do.

Jude, his black dog comes by from time to time. She also is exploring the garden; she doesn't like cats from other people's houses. A quick sniff or lick, and she's off to investigate under the shrubs and in the dirt. She used to knock him down when she came by, but now he's a big boy.

The smells of bread baking, and meat braising in the ovens waft out into the garden from the kitchen. Weekends are family time, warm sun, and mommy waiting for the new baby.

Noak will grow up in a very different world than Gordon. His arc of experience will consider grass raised meat and Bitcoins customary. There will likely continue to be strife in the Middle East, the South China Sea, and Eastern Europe.

From an early age Noak will learn of the frailty of the earth, and his personal responsibility of stewardship. He will see daily live-streams of far-off lands. He has already traveled internationally, and his friends will share a more global perspective than any past generation. All of this would have been incomprehensible to Gordon. Music will be accomplished with the encouragement of his talented parents; however, he will see the great architecture and art of the world at a young age.

Will he see stage musicals? Will he work with paper and pencil, or keyboard through his education? Friends and family will be far-flung, but available on a moment's notice on a screen.

As he matures, life will continue to broaden and challenge. Emotions, ethics, and disappointments need to be faced, and the young man strengthened, and developed. Though his world may stretch to other planets, he will still grapple with the matters of all men throughout the millennia.

Dirt & Life: The Arc From Simple through Complex and back to Simple

In a recent interview, the theologian Huston Smith described the three inescapable problems that have faced humans from the earliest development of civilization:

One - How to earn a living,

Two - How to get along with our fellow humans, and

Three - How to get along with ourselves.

He compares how the three enduring civilizations: the West, East Asia (China), and South Asia (India) have dealt with these problems in distinctive ways.

The West has focused on nature, and developed science - putting the emphasis on the material world. It has been very successful in providing livelihood, but tries to hide the fact of aging by using lovely metaphors. Western culture is youth oriented and, he feels, fails to properly deal with the challenges of aging.

China is considered the world's sociologists, creating a society where the elderly are not only respected more as they grow older, but through extended family structures, are assisted by younger generations.

Smith characterizes India as the world's psychologists - focusing on an individual's growth throughout their life in four stages: youth, family life, retirement - where a person seeks solitude to realize what life is all about, heading toward the final stage of renunciation.

Noak will be expected to successfully engage with all three while still a young man. Unlike earlier generations, his will not have a choice to choose; society will demand he address all three contemporaneously.

There is an interesting imponderable to Noak and Gordon's afternoon in the garden with their dirt. What if Gordon had the opportunity to pass along to the young boy his life experiences and wisdom? This was not to be, and is a good thing. Noak will do this alone...without his great grandfather.

He will have the support and comfort of loving parents, and discover the world of Epicurus from a stool in the kitchen, hands dusted in flour and fingers nicked with a paring knife. Noak will help making beer in the cellar, and learn to taste "the fruit of the vine and work of human hands". He will grow and harvest food for the family, and rejoice in the exquisite taste of a homegrown tomato he planted in the dirt.

Noak will also be counseled by Epictetus, learning that life is not fair, and death frequently just around the corner. Strengthened by bullies on the schoolyard, tumbling's in the surf, and miles on the dirt trail, he will grow strong and resilient. Facing adversity and moral dilemmas will tax his mind and soul. Developing personal responsibility, a sense of ethics, and empathy for others stand as challenges in his future.

Gordon couldn't have given any of this to the little boy; he will need to walk the path from shadow into light himself.

Back in the garden, the dirt session is over; Gordon and Noak are encouraged to help clean up so supper can be set. Their table is replete with platters of the carefully considered meal. A masterfully prepared main course, fresh vegetables, and a home-baked desert.

They sit with Gordon at one end, and Noak on a pillow, at the other. Four generations sit in front of carefully set places, each bowing their heads in thanks before launching into their usual lively conversation. The richness of Gordon's life has been incorporated into his daughter and grandson. Noak will thrive in the rich loam of this heritage, the product of both nature and nurture. Gordon and Noak will be intertwined in many ways, at all times, for the rest of his life.

THE OMEGA AND THE ALPHA

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God: Gordon.

We commit his body to the ground; earth to earth.

The Lord bless him and keep him, the Lord maketh his face to shine upon him and be gracious unto him and give him peace.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon your servant Noak the forgiveness of sin, and have raised him to the new life of grace.

Sustain him, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit.

Give him an inquiring and discerning heart,

the courage to will and,

the strength to persevere,

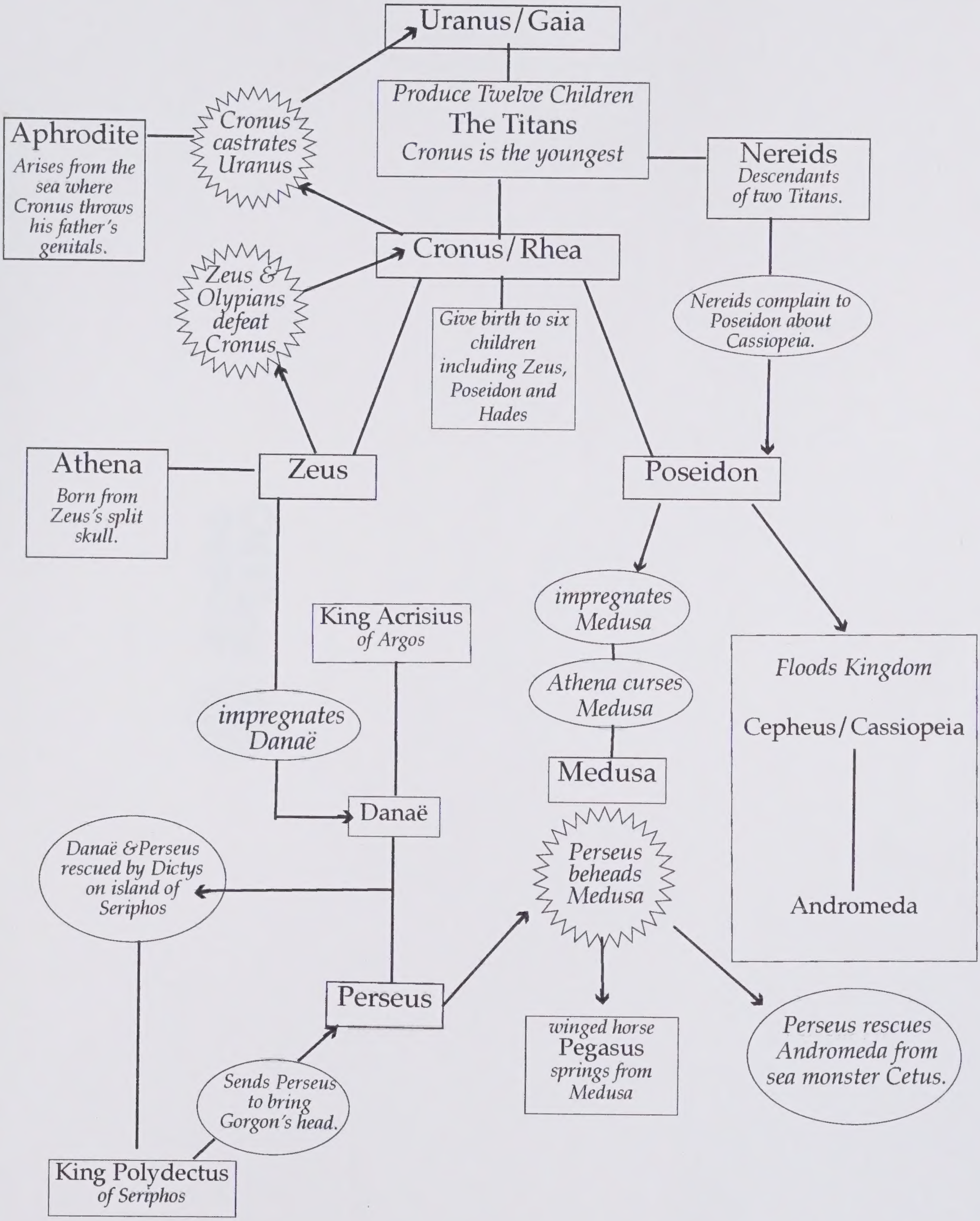
a spirit to know and to love you, and

the gift of joy and, wonder in all your works.

Amen.

Unfolding A Greek Myth

Charles Hobson: A paper for the club, December 9, 2013


Uranus/Gaia
Produce Twelve Children
The Titans
Cronus is the youngest
Cronus castrates Uranus
Aphrodite
Arises from the sea where Cronus throws his father's genitals.
Nereids
Descendants of two Titans.
Cronus/Rhea
Zeus & Olypians defeat Cronus
Give birth to six children including Zeus, Poseidon and Hades
Nereids complain to Poseidon about Cassiopeia.
Athena
Born from Zeus's split skull.
Zeus
Poseidon
impregnates Medusa
Athena curses Medusa
Medusa
King Acrisius of Argos
impregnates Danaë
Danaë
Floods Kingdom
Cepheus/Cassiopeia
Andromeda
Danaë & Perseus rescued by Dictys on island of Seriphos
Perseus beheads Medusa
Perseus
winged horse Pegasus springs from Medusa
Perseus rescues Andromeda from sea monster Cetus.
Sends Perseus to bring Gorgon's head.
King Polydectus of Seriphos

Charles Hobson: A paper for the club, December 9, 2013

Unfolding a Greek Myth

Several years ago in a paper for the club I told a story. In that paper I used the story of Andromeda as a jumping off point to consider the history of constellations and the human study of the heavens. Tonight I'd like to tell that story again to provide a new way of tracking Greek mythology.

So let us begin with the story.

Once upon a time there was a king of a prosperous and beautiful seaside kingdom. The citizens thrived and the fields were rich with crops. The king's wife, Cassiopeia, was a dazzling beauty. The King, whose name was Cepheus, was also blessed with a daughter. Her name was Andromeda and she was kind and generous and she was even more beautiful than her mother.

One day as the mother and daughter sat by the sea — the mother combing the daughter's long luxurious hair — the mother looked at her and said, "Why dear, you are more beautiful every day — even lovelier that the Nereids." Nereids were sea nymphs, god-like creatures, who were under the protection of Poseidon, and they overheard the queen's remark. They were offended that a mortal had compared the maiden's beauty to that of the gods and complained to Poseidon. He struck the sea with his trident and flooded the King's land, destroying crops and wrecking havoc everywhere. As a final punishment he sent a fearsome sea monster to lurk offshore. It threatened fishermen and devoured anyone who walked too near the water's edge.

King Cepheus knew nothing of the source of his country's troubles. Frustrated at his plight he consulted an oracle who revealed what had happened with his wife and the Nereids. In dismay he heard the oracle's prescription to set things right: "You must sacrifice your daughter to the sea monster to reinstate the prosperity of your land." Responding to the lamentations of his people, the King had his beautiful daughter chained naked to the rocks near the harbor. The skies darkened as the monster

approached the slim figure, and the country's citizens gathered on the hillside above the sea to watch what would happen.

But just then, flying above from the east, there appeared a youth riding a winged horse. The youth was returning from slaying the Gorgon, a snake headed monster so fearful and ugly that merely looking at it would turn the viewer into stone. For this task the youth had been given a curved sword, a mirrored shield and a leather pouch. Creeping up on the sleeping Gorgon the youth used the mirrored shield to avoid a direct look at her petrifying face while he severed her head. Putting the head in the pouch he was about to flee when he was aided by a stroke of good fortune. At the moment of the Gorgon's death a magnificent winged horse sprang from the Gorgon’s body and the youth mounted it and took off for home.

Halfway through his journey he happened to look down and saw at the edge of the sea the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen — chained naked to a huge rock. Smitten by her beauty he landed and asked a bystander what was happening. Learning of the tragic state of affairs he sought out the King. "I know of you difficulties, Sire. If you promise me your daughter's hand in marriage, I'll rescue her from the sea monster." Troubled that such an act might further insult Poseidon, the king expressed reluctance. "Don’t worry," the youth replied, “you've done your part — you’ve turned her over to the monster — that I risk my life to interfere is a tribute to your daughter's beauty, not an affront to the gods."

At the seaside the crowd pushed close to the edge of the cliff as the youth on his magical horse swooped down toward the sea monster. The beast reared its fearsome head and slapped its thick, scaly tail against the sea making a crack as loud as thunder. The sound and the sight were so terrifying that even the magic horse swerved for a moment. But the young warrior had a plan — as he neared the creature he flew between the sun and sea so that his shadow fell on the surface of the water just in front of the monster. As the monster lunged at the dark shape in the water, the youth struck its neck from behind with his curved sword and dealt the beast a mortal wound. In its death throes it spun to

find its attacker, but the youth scooted away from its thrashing and freed the trembling princess from her chains.

Arriving on land the citizens applauded his victory. However, the queen, Cassiopiea, rather than being impressed with her brave young son-in-law-to-be, preferred instead that Andromeda should marry the prince of a nearby land to whom the daughter had been promised before the rescue. Andromeda, on the other hand, was thrilled at being alive and was smitten with her handsome rescuer. She insisted on a quick marriage. At the ceremony, just as the "I do's" were about to be pronounced, the queen opened a flap in the tent and ushered in a hundred armed warriors led by the disappointed suitor. "Kill the groom," she commanded. A melee ensued and just as the youth was about to be overwhelmed he pulled the Gorgon's head from the leather bag and turned his attackers into stone. The bride and groom finished their vows and escaped on the magic horse. And they lived happily ever after. Well not exactly, but that's another story.

So what is the other story?

Let me begin the answer this way.

I'd like to use the story I have told you--the Andromeda myth--as a way to catalog some of the Greek gods and some of the most tantalizing of the Greek myths. Perhaps you noticed in telling the story that I used the name of only one identifiable Greek god, Poseidon. Let me begin to identify some of the other characters in the story. The youth on the winged horse is Perseus. How he came to be riding the winged horse, Pegasus, involves a tale with many twists and turns.

[Unfold Diagram. I hope this will help you keep track of all of the characters.]

As with so many such tales it begins with Zeus, the supreme god. Although Zeus had the highest status among the gods he was often temperamental, impetuous and an enormous womanizer. In many tales he assumed false shapes in order to seduce women he fancied.

One such woman was the beautiful Danaë, the daughter of King Acrisius of Argos, who happened to be Perseus's mother. King Acrisius had received a warning from an oracle

that his grandson would kill him. Alarmed by this prediction he imprisoned his daughter in a bronze room where he kept her under strict guard. Zeus thwarted him and seduced and impregnated Danaë by taking the form of a shower of gold, which fell through a crack in the roof. (Some observers have suggested that the shower of gold was a metaphor about how money can derail human plans.) The King suspected his brother was the culprit and refused to believe in the divine origin. He put Danaë and her baby into a wooden ark, which he cast out, to sea. The ark came to rest in the bushes at the edge of an island kingdom, Seriphos, and a fisherman named Dictys found them and took the mother and child to his brother who happened to be the king of that country. The king, Polydectes, took them in. However, it became clear that his motives were not entirely charitable. King Polydectes developed a passion for Danaë and tried to force marriage on her but she constantly refused. Perseus grew up and helped his mother rebuff Polydectes. As an inducement to King Polydectes to marry another woman and leave his mother alone the youth promised to bring the King the head of the Gorgon as a wedding present — a rash undertaking.

As we know the Gorgon gave new meaning to the word ugly. Years before she had been a beautiful handmaiden to Athena, but Athena was a goddess who valued chastity above all else. When Poseidon seduced the handmaiden in Athena's temple Athena was enraged and punished the handmaiden for her presumed complicity by transforming the girl into a monster whose mere gaze would turn a person into stone. As a handmaiden she had beautiful long curls which became a head full of writhing snakes.

The youth's task seemed impossible, but whether out of capriciousness or a desire to further punish Medusa, Athena offered her help to Perseus and gave him the mirrored shield which he used to avoid a direct look at the petrifying face. As we know, at the moment of the Gorgon's death a magnificent winged horse sprang from her body. It was the offspring from her seduction by Poseidon. (The god had taken the form of a horse when he seduced her.) Leaping astride the animal the youth galloped out of the cave and into the sky, exhilarated by his victory and the glorious mount he'd found. Just then he happened to look down.

We now know what he did when he looked down and saw the beautiful Andromeda. After the wedding Perseus and Andromeda traveled back on Pegasus to Seriphos, the land where Perseus had left his mother. They found that King Polydectus had attempted to rape Danaë and she had fled to refuge in the temple with the help of Dictys, the king's brother. Enraged at the attempted rape, Perseus showed the Gorgon's head to Polydectus and turned him into stone.

Perseus appointed Dictys to rule Seriphos and returned the mirrored shield to Athena. He also gave her the head of the Medusa and she set it as an image in the middle of her shield. Perseus then left with Andromeda to return to his birthplace, Argos, wanting to see his grandfather, King Acrisius.

Back in Argos, King Acrisius, learned of the impending visit of his grandson and still feared the Oracle's prediction. He left Argos and went to Larissa where the King of that city greeted him. As events unfolded, the King of Larissa had organized funeral games in honor of his dead father. Unbeknownst to King Acrisius, Perseus had been invited and, as King Acrisius sat in the audience, Perseus performed in the discus throw. A wind, perhaps aided by the god's sense of symmetry or whimsy, caused the discus to fly astray and strike Acrisius, giving him a mortal wound. The Oracle's prediction came true and the story came full circle.

An Index System.

As I mentioned earlier, I like to think of the Andromeda Myth and the related myths of Danaë and of Medusa as a way to index the Greek gods instead of making an alphabetical list. Admittedly these myths cover only a portion of the cosmos of the Olympian gods and their stories, but they build a skeleton upon which gods and goddesses and noteworthy mortals can take their place. In the telling of the Andromeda Myth and the related myths of Danaë and of Medusa we've touched briefly upon Zeus, Poseidon, the Nereids, and Athena, all of whom who deserve some further attention.

sisters and moved to take revenge. Zeus persuaded a sea nymph to administer an emetic to Cronos which made Cronos regurgitate the stone that was substituted for Zeus at his birth, followed by all the children Cronus had swallowed earlier. Zeus then led his brothers and sisters in a revolt that lasted ten years against Cronos and the other Titans who sided with Cronos. Zeus and his brothers and sisters based themselves on Mount Olympus, and as a result became known as the Olympian gods. They achieved a total victory over the Titans in a decisive battle when Zeus, armed with his thunderbolts, Poseidon, with his trident and Hades wearing a helmet of invisibility attacked Cronos in a combined assault. The defeated Titans were exiled. The victory led to the ascendance of the Olympian gods. After the victory over Cronos the three drew lots to see who would control the various realms and Poseidon became the god of the sea. Zeus became the god of the earth and sky and Hades, the god of the underworld.

Poseidon.

Poseidon held power over all sources of water. He was capable of both great fury and life-sustaining refreshment. He flooded fertile plains and ruined them (as in the Andromeda myth) or caused springs to pop up where they were most needed. He was an active participant in wars among the gods and among the mortals. Since he controlled the seas he was credited with affecting the outcome of battles using his control of the tides, winds and storms. Some sources credit Poseidon with creating the horse and he is often depicted as riding a golden chariot pulled by white horses. The Trident became his signature weapon. Like his brother Zeus, Poseidon had countless affairs, including the one with Medusa.

(When Achilles killed one of his sons, Poseidon helped arrange the Greek hero's death. Despite this particular grudge, Poseidon otherwise supported the Greeks against the Trojans. However, when Odysseus blinded Poseidon's son, the Cyclops Polyphemus, the god worked against Odysseus on his voyage home.)

The Nereids were sea nymphs who were the descendants of two Titians, and Poseidon became their protector. They are frequently pictured as playing in the waves and letting their hair flow around them. They appear most frequently in legends as spectators but

some have more specific personalities that include Thetis, who was the mother of Achilles and Galatea, whose partner was the Cyclops. The Nereids were also credited with smoothing the way of Jason's ship, the Argo, on his voyage to search for the Golden Fleece.

Athena

Athena, sometimes called the goddess of good counsel, was the daughter of Zeus but was born in an unusual manner. Just as Uranus and Cronos feared their offspring might supplant them, Zeus worried he might be overthrown by one of his. Zeus impregnated Metis, the Titan goddess of prudence and wisdom. Fearing that the child might prove to be more wise and powerful that he was Zeus swallowed Metis. He hoped to kill the unborn child but at the same time keep the wisdom for himself. Several months later he developed an agonizing headache. The pain was so great that he commanded Hephaestus to cut his head open with an ax. Athena sprang as an adult and fully armed from the gash.

In many myths Athena acts as a counterpoint to Aphrodite – reason versus passion, wisdom versus beauty. As patron of Athens, Athena came to a stand for the power of intelligence, self-possession and knowledge. She was committed to chastity and remained unswayed by the power of love or passion.

She also became a protector of heroes such as Jason who led the Argonauts, Theseus who became king of Athens and Odysseus on his ten-year journey home after the Trojan wars. Perseus was one of her favorites, as a son of Zeus, and this prompted her to lend him her mirrored shield and to aid him with her advice. Her antagonism with Medusa when she was had been her handmaiden gave Athena some additional motive to help Perseus.

I'd like to depart here from the strict outline of the Andromeda and the associated myths to consider Aphrodite. You may recall that Cronos castrated his father Uranus and threw his father's genitals into the sea. What I did not mention earlier is that Aphrodite rose naked from the sea where they landed, the semen of Uranus mixed with

the sea foam. From this union, untainted by sexual contact, Aphrodite was conceived. As she walked out of the sea, grass and flowers sprang up wherever her feet touched the earth. She was brought up on Cyprus and when the Olympians defeated Cronos she was taken to Olympus, where the gods, moved by her beauty, welcomed her.

Aphrodite represents both the sacred and profane aspects of love, personifying both romantic love and sexual passion. While she leads women into adulterous relationships, she also encourages marriage and faithfulness. She existed before the Olympians came into being, but she was lovelier than any of the other goddesses. She was the patroness of sex and therefore of procreation but at the same time she delighted in bawdy behavior. Because she was the goddess of sexual passion, she had absolute control over lust and even Zeus was not able to seduce her. Instead, to punish her for her refusal, he forced her to marry Hephaestus, the least attractive of the Olympic gods. Hephaestus was the god of fire and the forge and walked with a limp.

She was desired by all and had her choice of partners. However, Aphrodite had a grand passion for Ares, the god of war, and the long-standing affair between the two was whispered about among the gods. Her husband Hephaestus had no idea about what was going on. According to Homer, the sun surprised the two lovers in Aphrodite's bed one morning and told Hepheastus about it. Hephaestus made a plan to take revenge. He forged a lightweight net of chain and waited until the two gods were lying in bed in amorous combat. He threw the net over the couple, imprisoning them. He then summoned all the Olympian gods to come and witness Aphrodite and Ares in their embarrassing position. His taunting was unrelenting and he urged further punishment for the two. The female deities refused to take part and the males were swayed by Aphrodite's beauty. Poseidon led the resistance to Hephaestus's' remonstrations and eventually urged him to relent. In exchange for this kindness Aphrodite later slept with Poseidon and gave him two sons.

What the story of Aphrodite reveals is the capriciousness of the gods and their lack of moral judgment. How can Poseidon be justified in promoting the death of Andromeda for the mere passing compliment by a mother to a daughter? In the case

of Medusa, consider how unjust was for Athena to punish a handmaiden who had been forcibly raped by a god? Did Zeus know what a chain of events he was going to foster when he satisfied his sexual urge by impregnating Danae? It's also interesting to note in the origin stories of the gods that there is a persistent fear that the father will be overthrown by his son. The mythology reflects the nature of an irrational, brutal and tribal world.

These episodes also reveal the abundance of unintended consequences in the life of the gods and by their example, in the lives of ordinary human beings. Yet there is something innately appealing to mortals about the conduct of the gods. Perhaps it is the recognition that life itself is indeed capricious, unruly and filled with unintended consequences.

Every civilization, in establishing its cultural identity and attempting to explain the world's mysteries has developed a broad-based mythology of some sort. Of all the mythologies, those of the Greeks have become embedded in Western European culture more pervasively than any other.

Initially, the myths traveled with the Greeks around the Mediterranean and, later, with the Romans further afield. They are long, eventful stories produced initially in an oral tradition and the earliest written accounts are attributed to the Greek poets Hesiod and Homer. These rich stories have survived because they have embedded in them universal attitudes and still seem to have relevance thousands of years after their initial telling.

Afterword

I'd like to say something about the diagram that accompanies this paper. Constructing it, I believe, put my mind closer to the frame of mind of the 4th century Greeks. I say this because the complex connections between the gods and mortals

delineated in the diagram would have been more easily comphrehended in their minds. At that time they would have been more adept with the oral tradition and would have had a memory of a much higher order than we do in our contemporary world. Socrates observed in his time that there might be some virtue in the written word for use "against forgetfulness." However, he argued that dependence on the technology of the alphabet would alter a person's mind by substituting symbols for inner memory. Writing, he argued, would make us shallower thinkers, preventing us from achieving an intellectual depth that leads to wisdom and true happiness. I hope you see in the diagram, not only information about indexing the gods, but in giving some insight to a time when information was housed in a different way in the human mind.

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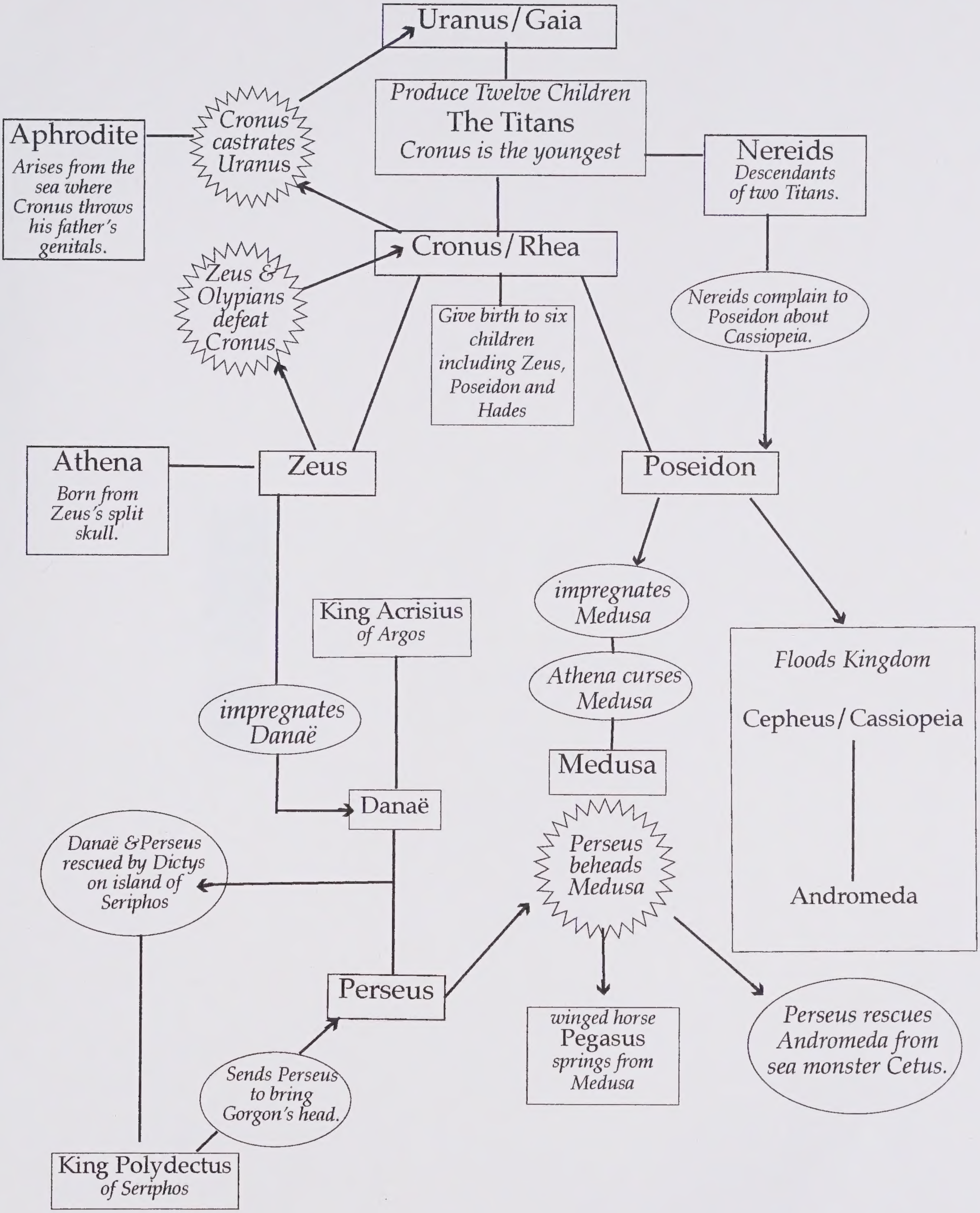
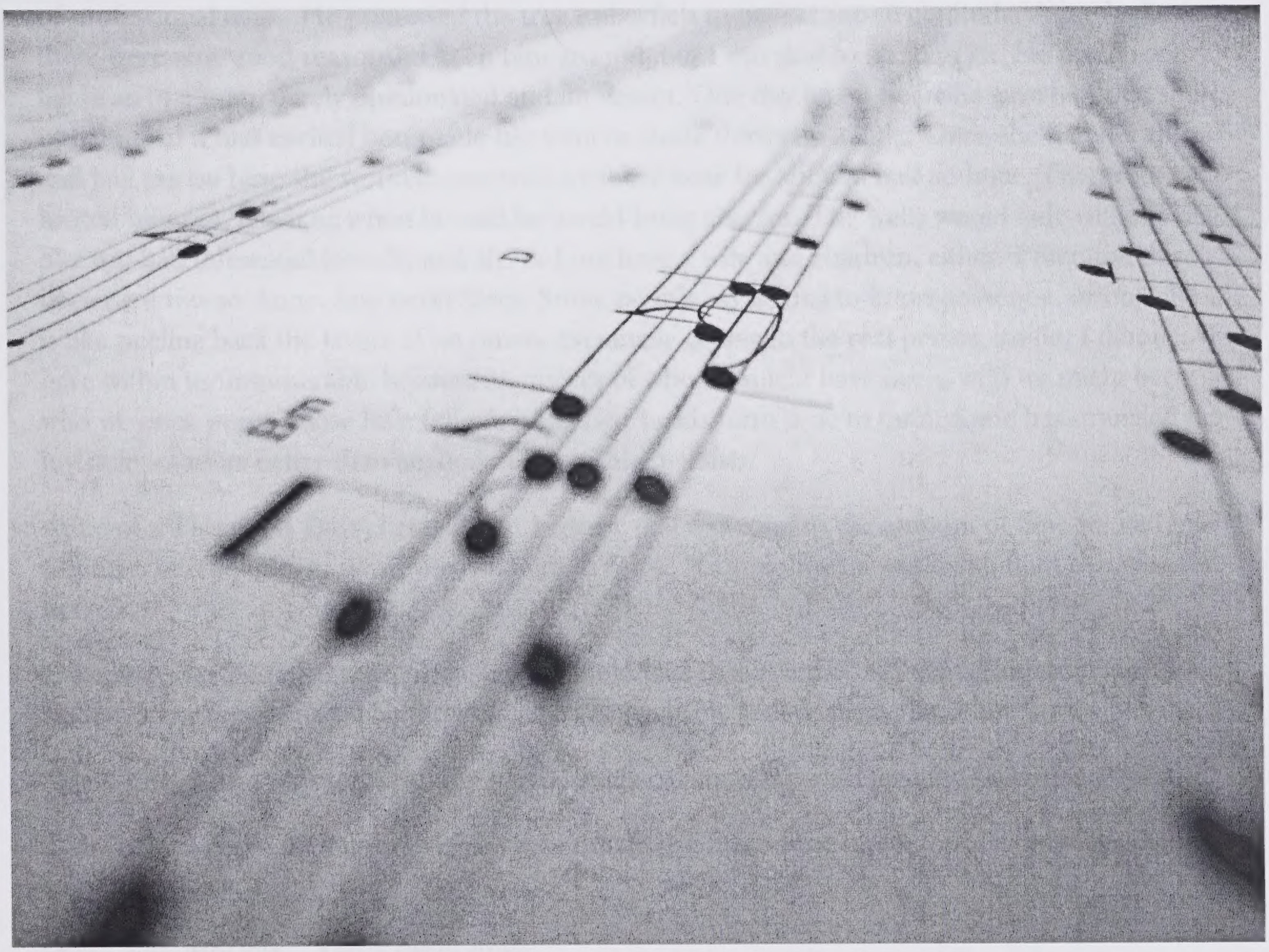
Unfolding A Greek Myth

Charles Hobson: A paper for the club, December 9, 2013


Uranus/Gaia
Produce Twelve Children
The Titans
Cronus is the youngest
Aphrodite
Arises from the sea where Cronus throws his father's genitals.
Cronus castrates Uranus
Nereids
Descendants of two Titans.
Cronus/Rhea
Zeus & Olypians defeat Cronus
Give birth to six children including Zeus, Poseidon and Hades
Nereids complain to Poseidon about Cassiopeia.
Athena
Born from Zeus's split skull.
Zeus
Poseidon
impregnates Medusa
Floods Kingdom
Cepheus/Cassiopeia
Andromeda
King Acrisius
of Argos
Athena curses Medusa
impregnates Danaë
Medusa
Danaë
Danaë & Perseus rescued by Dictys on island of Seriphos
Perseus beheads Medusa
Perseus
winged horse
Pegasus
springs from Medusa
Perseus rescues Andromeda from sea monster Cetus.
Sends Perseus to bring Gorgon's head.
King Polydectus
of Seriphos

Fidel Castro Gets Drunk After Every Battle



Philip E. Bowles
the club
14 October 2013

Fidel Castro Gets Drunk After Every Battle

Phillip E. Hawkins
the club
14 October 2013

Vermont nights are still as dark as a G minor, and the only thing my headlights showed through the dust as I reached the end of Anne's driveway was the back of a dark 7 series BMW with a Jesus fish where the model designation was supposed to be. Oh, shit. A lead sled built to ferry burgomasters and bankers in the rear seats, not an Ultimate Driving Machine. Could this really be the ride of the new boyfriend Luke, the Director of Photography from her last feature? He should be Luke the physician, I thought, with that fuddy-duddy doctor's car, and a damned Jesus freak to boot. At least he might be better company than the environmentalist.

Naturally, environmentalist had been a vegan, and Executive Director of some large national group of professional nags. He possessed the true imbecile's impatient moral certitude. Anne had said there were nine good reasons to keep him around, but I was glad to see him go. He was an angry tall bean of a man, overly opinionated and intolerant. One day he hit her. She gave him that smile of hers, said it had excited her, made her want to shake things up a little. Once she had the cuffs and ball gag on him, she worked over with a rubber hose for about a half an hour. Then she kicked him out, laughing when he said he would bring charges. The welts would fade within a day. She too had influential friends, and she did not have a wife and children, either. I mention this because it was so Anne. She never loses. Some people say getting to know someone, or ourselves, is like peeling back the layers of an onion, eventually getting to the real person inside. I demur. We have within us innumerable homunculi, pieces of who we might have been, who we might become, who we once were. These little fellows raise their heads form time to time. Anne has strangled her invisible invaders better than anybody I know. She persists.

Anne of a Thousand Days, I called her, because that was roughly the amount of time we had been together, or a couple, or whatever you want to call it. "Couple" was a word with fluid meaning for her.

"Malcolm says I am polyamourous, and I should take that as a gift" Malcolm Rothstein was her ancient Viennese shrink. The dirty old alligator probably just wanted to hear her stories.

"Hell, Eric, it's no different than my having lunch or a massage with the guy. Lighten up, cookie."

"Maybe you could try lunching where they don't have fish on the menu, or he could massage you somewhere else."

"Fuck you, wise guy." And a sweet smile.

The LA years. Maybe the Thousand Days would have lasted longer had we not been there. Neither one of us had much artistic pretention, despite our respective graduate degrees in drama and music, we wanted both fame and money. LA is where it seemed easiest to find. We had been friends for years before, from when we had our cabaret act as undergraduates. We had stayed friends; neither one of us had a close family, so were confidants, holiday companions, mutual crying shoulders.

Families. “Your father is playing a gig”, my mother would say. I have some early memories of when he was around, but then he was on tour in Europe, or doing session work, or any one of a thousand places my mother probably invented. He was a horn player of minor repute, and she lived and died as a night club tramp. Her parents had made some provision for an allowance for her, so I grew up in reasonable middle class respectability. When other men began to hang around the house, I became an angry young mulatto Telemachus, waiting for my father’s return. Eventually I learned to erase him. They tell me he lives in Denmark, and is reduced to taking humiliating gigs like playing sideman for the repulsive Billy Joel. I never met the grandparents, and income died with my mother. It made little difference. I had long since learned to live on my wits and my race, either one, as convenient.

Anne’s mother was a suicide; her father was some unknown teenage boyfriend. Abortion was unthinkable in her large Catholic family. Little Orphan Annie was passed around the siblings and cousins, an economic and moral burden, the product of mortal sin consequent on grave sin, and they felt they had to bear her. Like Grandma’s Christmas fruitcake, she said, something nobody wanted yet felt too guilty to discard. Later, as she gained celebrity, some of them tried to capitalize, and she brushed them off with a couple of headshots mailed by her agent.

That’s all we were, just brother/sister companions and artistic collaborators. I think of some of our friends from before, eking out livings by writing atonal string pieces for a handful of grey haired admirers, or directing another summer stock revival of Chekhov. Neither of us had seen any of those people for years.

Early in her career, Anne was happy to do commercials, or soaps, or crummy pictures; but nothing that would harm her reputation. She became known as a disciplined and cooperative character actor, a supporting actress, who never had fits or showed up on set late and loaded. She would help other cast members with dropped lines, improvising around their flubs the way a good sax player can, without thinking. She understands and respects the basis of the actor’s craft. Too many indolent artists don’t. David Thomson once grouped Anne with Karen Black, Barbara Hershey and Debra Winger. Anne took this badly, but like most of Thomson’s observations, it was accurate.

It didn’t hurt that she was, even for Hollywood, a notoriously light skirt, too. This is what brought the Thousand Days to an end. I suppose Anne is the woman I have come closest to loving. I am not that possessive, but the Thousand Days almost destroyed our friendship.

We spent those fifteen years out there, roped together like mountain climbers, and the industry was very kind to both of us. There were times she’d be on a long location job, or one of us might be involved with someone too jealous or too captivating. Then we might have a falling out, or just be out of touch for half a year. Old friendships survive those things the way a rubber boat glides over the jagged rocks of a rapid. I have never trusted anyone the way I trusted Anne (liaisons aside), and the feeling was mutual. I bought a place in Malibu with a small sound studio, did my film score and jingle writing, record producing, arranging. I had all the work I wanted, sometimes

Families. "Your father is playing a gig", my mother would say. I have some early memories of when he was around, but then he was on tour in Europe, or doing session work, or any one of a thousand places my mother probably invented. He was a horn player of minor repute, and she lived and died as a night club tramp. Her parents had made some provision for an allowance for her, so I grew up in reasonable middle class respectability. When other men began to hang around the house, I became an angry young mulatto. I channeling—songs for my father's return. Eventually I wanted to erase him. They tell me he lives in Denmark, and sometimes I imagine him—someone else playing saxophone for the repulsive Billy Joel. I never met the grandparents, and income died with my mother. It made little difference. I had long since learned to live on my wits and my race, either one, as convenient.

Anne's mother was a Swede; her father was some unknown German boyfriend. Abortion was unthinkable in her large Catholic family. Little Corinne Anne was passed around most of the relatives and cousins, an economic and moral burden, the product of mortal sin conceived in great shame, and they felt they had to bear her. Like Grandma's Christmas fruitcake, she was something nobody wanted yet felt too guilty to discard. Later, as she gained celebrity, some of the relatives tried to reconnect, and she brushed them off with a couple of bucks as routed by her agent.

That's all we were, just two abandoned youngsters and a couple of misfits. I think of some of our friends from before, skating on the fringes of society, clever as some people don't; a handful of grey-haired admirers, or charming uncles, someone much in need of a lifeline. Neither of us had seen any of those people for years.

Early in her career, Anne was happy to do commercials, ad work, or extreme roles, but it was that would make her reputation. She became known as a disciplined and cooperative character actor, a supporting actress, who never had fits or showed up on set late and hung-over. She would help other cast members with dropped lines, or would improvise around them, like the way a good jazz player can, without thinking. She understood and respected the tools of the actor's craft. Even quiet and silent ones count. Dave Thomson once grouped Anne with Karen Black, Barbara Hershey and Debra Winger. Anne took this badly, for like most of Thomson's observations, it was accurate.

It didn't hurt that she was, even for Hollywood, a notoriously light skirt, too. That's what brought the Thousand Days to an end, I suppose. Anne is the woman I have come closest to loving. I am not that possessive, but the Thousand Days almost destroyed our friendship.

We spent those fifteen years out there, roped together like mountain climbers, and the industry was very kind to both of us. There were times she'd be on a long location job, or one of us might be involved with someone for weeks or months. Then we might have a falling out, or not be seen of much for half a year. Old friendships survive these things, the way a rubber band will stretch even the largest circles of a rope. I have never trusted anyone the way I trusted Anne, it seems, and the feeling was mutual. I bought a place in Malibu with a small sound studio, did my film scores and music writing, record producing, arranging. I had all the work I wanted, sometimes more. Anne never bought a house out there, always just renting. And she rented pretty modest places, too. We are both careful with money, having come from none, although in those days she was far more of a cheapskate than me. These days...these days I am careful too. Anne is practical above all else. She said she never wanted to feel tied to LA. What she did buy was the place in Vermont, with her first big picture fee. All cash, no mortgage. It was her bolt-hole, a place to retreat to, where her modest celebrity was ignored politely by the neighbors.

I kept the place in Malibu, but the coke and the noise and the smells of LA were starting to get the better of me. I had enough money, and something felt like it was changing in the music industry. That turned out to be an understatement. So I took an easy gig at an Ivy League college, and moved East. The job gave me plenty of time to do any work I cared to on the side. I have always been happy to capitalize on the status granted by my half-breed genes. The college dopes considered me part of their "diversity" profile. To think that they would patronize and worship me the way they would some witless thug who yapped his crap before a pounding drum machine! I hold a Doctorate from the Berklee School of Music, for God's sake! My Malibu connection, the Porsche, the Brioni jeans, my easy familiarity with famous names, all gave me a sort of louche exoticism around campus. Men and women with post doctorate degrees, theories named after them, academic giants; these all are pathetically impressed when they find out you hung out with some barely literate guitar player, or a song writer who had never studied meter. Really, they are as easy to fool as goats. Most of the students are decent types, with one exception. More about that later.

About a year later, Anne left LA for the house in Vermont. She could still do some work, but really didn't need the money, and got tired of rejecting the stereotypical roles thrown at a woman her age. She had devoted her semi -retirement to ceramics, and built a studio in a shed on the property. She would toil there for hours, enthusiastically making cups, plates, vases, misshapen and ugly. I have seen woodworkers and music students with that ruinous mix of ardent incompetence. At least Anne did not want to make a living in ceramics. Whenever she broke up with somebody, she would go into her studio and throw all her creations on the floor. Maybe that's why she made them in the first place.

The house was dark, Anne's bedroom light was out; I let myself in quietly. Christ, no bourbon where it ought to be. Not even beer in the refrigerator. Could the Jesus freak be a tee-totaller too? Anne did not care for drink much one way or the other, but it was not like her to be like this. She is always thinking of others, that is part of her loveliness, and part of what made her loving her impossible. The house had a horrible old Hamilton upright from a prior owner, the kind you rent for an untalented child, but she kept it in tune and with the action and felts in good shape, because she knew I needed to write on it some days. No booze. This *was* shaping up to be a weekend. I poured myself a stiff one from the emergency supply I keep in the car, plugged in the laptop, and finished the vocal arrangements I had promised a week ago.

more. Anne never bought a house out there. Always was renting. And she rented great rental places, too. We are both careful with money. [illegible] comes from more, although in those days she was far more of a cheapskate than me. [illegible], these days I am careful too. Anne is [illegible] above all else. She said she never wanted to feel tied to L.A. What she did buy was the place in Vermont, with her first big promotion. All cash, no mortgage. It was her [illegible], a place to retreat to, where her [illegible] was ignored entirely by the neighbors.

I kept the place in Malibu, but the calm and the noise and the smells of LA were starting to get the better of me. I had enough money, and something felt like it was changing in the music industry. That turned out to be an understatement. So I took an easy gig at an Ivy League college, and moved East. The job gave me plenty of time to do any work I cared to, as the school had always been happy to capitalize on the name granted to any half-baked genius. The college department considered me part of their "diversity" profile. To think that they would recognize, and fetishize me the way they would some white thing who earned his crap [illegible] doctorate degree? I hold a Doctorate from the Berklee School of Music, for God's sake! My [illegible] than the Porsche, the Grammy nominations, my easy familiarity with famous names, all gave me a sort of badass credibility around campus. Men and women with real doctorate degrees, [illegible] them academic geeks, these all got predictably impressed when they heard our [illegible] some lovely, famous guitar player or a drummer who had never worked as hard. So they were so easy to fool anyways. Most of the academic ones are [illegible] types, with few exceptions. Most of them hate me.

About a year later, Anne left LA for the house in Vermont. She could still do the same work; she really didn't need the money, and got tired of repeating the same [illegible] with the rest of LA at her age. She had devoted her semi-retirement to ceramics, and built a studio in a shed on the property. She would be out there for hours, sometimes days, making tiles, plates, bowls, vases, and urns. I have seen [illegible] and they are beautiful [illegible]. At least Anne did not want to make a living as a potter. Whenever she broke up with some lover, she would go into her studio and throw all her emotions on the [illegible]. Maybe that's why she [illegible] them in the first place.

The house was dark. Anne's bedroom light was one I let myself [illegible]; I [illegible] where it ought to be. The [illegible] to the refrigerator. I [illegible] the [illegible] Anne did not care for drink, so it was [illegible] on the other, but it was not like her to [illegible]. It always [illegible], but it's part of her loneliness, and part of what makes her [illegible]. The house had a [illegible] old Hathaway upright [illegible] for an [illegible], but she [illegible] she knew I had to [illegible]. The [illegible] from the [illegible] I brought to the [illegible] the [illegible] I had [illegible] a week ago.

The first light told my eyes it was time to waken, and my ears told me that Luke the Physician knew his anatomy and was not a vegetarian, at least. Anne is one of those girls who, shall we say, vocalizes a lot. It seems to have nothing to do with how much of a passionate nature they have, but some girls do, and some girls don't. There is something both erotic and theatrical about this overt noisiness, but also something that made me feel like an object. I had endured not a few sidelong glances at hotels, and weekend houses where we had stayed during the Thousand Days.

I was on my second cup of coffee when Luke came downstairs. Big athletic blonde guy with long hair and a slight Texas drawl. Younger, by about ten years. I could see him as a baseball player. Introductions made, he had an easy, open manner and went back upstairs to bring Anne a cup of coffee. I did not sense any of the Jesus freak/teetotaler superiority or condescension I had expected. In fact I had wanted to dislike him on those accounts, but he seemed so cheerful and attractive I just didn't have it in me.

Scrapple is what Anne cooked us for breakfast, some dark shadow from her Philadelphia upbringing. Over the years I had acquired a tolerance for the greasy stuff, and poor Luke looked as though he would make a game attempt to enjoy it.

"Did you see Luke's new car? It's *fast*."

"It was pretty late when I arrived"

"It's a car I always wanted, a 740i, the V-12. I got it from a doctor in my AA group. He lost his license from dipping into the anesthetics. Then he found Jesus, who I suppose is a safer anesthetic. I only bought the car last month, but I kept the Jesus fish on there thinking it might help me out of a ticket. But it's starting to embarrass me, and I think I'll take it off this weekend, and fill the holes in the trunk."

"You don't like Jesus?" seeing if I could josh him a little.

"Jesus is just all right with me. I just don't want him on my sleeve. Or my car."

"How long have you been doing the AA ting?" I have plenty of friends who have taken that cure, and have nothing against it. It's just not my thing.

"A year this weekend, actually. Seems I liked Mr. Jack, and a whole lot of other things, more than they liked me. Especially when work started to go away".

"You're still shooting regularly, aren't you?"

"No like the old days, at least in the past few years. God damned digital capture, it's enough to drive a man to drink" A charming smile.

"Tell me about it"

We fell into an easy conversation that lasted through and after breakfast, him griping about the new world of computerized production, me whining about how sampling and post production enhancements had ruined creativity. Bad voices sounded good. Fat actors looked slim. Arrangements I wrote were showing up in work I was never paid for. Scenes he shot were relit in post to the point of unrecognizability. Nobody wanted to pay for quality any more. Just a couple of too-soon obsolete guys swapping war stories, but without a lot of bitterness and whining. We had been treated well by The Industry, and if we did not want to have to go to MIT to learn how to keep up, well that was just the way it was going to be. I never held any sympathy for the men who used to work in the shuttered factories in the New England countryside. If they could not adapt, or if they had not saved anything during the years when they had those "good, Union jobs" making now useless crap like TV antennas, fuck them. Luke had come from a west Texas town where there was football, cotton farming, and nothing else. "Just not big enough, dumb enough, or mean enough for football" he said, although I judged he'd certainly had the body of an all-pro wide receiver, at least back then. "I played in the band." he said. "I had to go to the Baptist church and there was music there, too. My momma was proud we weren't in the other church, the Nazarenes. 'There's no white person more stupider', she used to say,' *than a Naz-a-reen*." Anne joined in on this last. It must have been a joke they had shared before. "Anyway, music got me a ticket out of there, a scholarship to TSU."

"Ever do anything with it?"

"Got laid a lot when I played in a band, Luke and the Apostles. I was the leader because I could sing a little, and because I was the only one who could read music. Most of us kids back in the church choir could not read much else, but we did learn how to do that. I guess I could have done something more with music, but that life looked too uncertain. I had seen enough uncertainty with the cotton farmers, and what it did to them. It didn't make them plan better, it made them hate, and whine. Hate their God for his bad weather, and whine for money when their crops failed. Then pay off debts in a good year, buy a new truck or tractor on time, and feel no gratitude or generosity for their good fortune. No, sir. No place for me. I liked movies, and photography, and there were decent jobs right out of school. A PA made fifty bucks a day, and there were chances to move up the ladder. The other guys on the crew though I was a sort of funny hayseed, and the old Jews in production liked my work ethic. Which was basically agreeing to shoot anything for them for a lower day rate than some other guy."

"Still play?"

"A little, just for fun. I used to be able to play sax, and keyboards, but now I just fart around on the guitar a little. Blues, simple stuff. I have a dobro."

Maybe Anne had found a good one, I hoped. I was beginning to like the guy, partly because he and Anne were obviously crazy about each other, partly because he seemed honest and straightforward, and partly because he was so damned good looking. Attractive people have an easier time in life. I always wondered how just a few horrible, hairy little schlubs found great

success with women. Most didn't but some did. It must be because they are so horny. More things I will never understand about women.

"Luke has a beautiful ranch in Templeton, and we can go horseback riding." The Templeton scene is largely high level technicians, cameramen, sound engineers, editors. Close enough to LA to be convenient, but even further away than Santa Barbara. My tastes still leaned toward Malibu. But I saw the appeal.

"You seem pretty young to retire to a horse farm."

"You're right, there's still stuff I want to shoot, pictures, documentaries even. I just can't get the sound stage out of my blood. Maybe being sober makes it easier to think of facing the bullshit again. Being in New York instead of LA is a big help. I can still shoot commercials to pay the bills."

After breakfast, Luke drove into town to get some paint and Bondo for his car, and I made a few desultory passes on the piano. Anne came and sat on the bench next to me. "Well, what do you think?" We had always had a little fun deconstructing her relationships, from the celebrity chef ("prick with a fork") to the Frenchman ("foreign object which should be kept out of orifices") to the Rastafarian ("Jamacian jerk"). The breakups would end in tears, and recriminations, and Anne sobbing on the telephone or on my shoulder. It was part of my function.

"Sweetie, I just met the guy, but he strikes me as a possible keeper. Sounds like he knows what he's doing." With this last, I managed to make her blush, which was a small victory. She's beautiful with a flushed face, and it had been a long time since I had seen her with one made the proper way.

They spent the afternoon picking up dinner at the roadside stands all the local farmers seemed to be running, and generally doing all the things the tourist board expected visitors to do. I was happy enough to be alone pottering around the house, working on a few charts, and making a run to Bennington where I could get some booze and a few decent bottles of wine for dinner.

I broiled the quail they brought home, and I braised their fresh grapes in some rosemary and demi-glace with a side of polenta. Anne is completely clueless about cooking, she has no instinct for it, and Luke appeared to be the typical single guy who appreciates good food but does not care to cook.

Up there, Anne and I would usually play a little music after dinner, typically the cabaret piano material we did back in college. When instead she asked Luke to play a little guitar music, my chest tightened. Jealousy, yeah. A break in a routine, yeah. These things upset me. And now I was going to have to listen to another guy play something, badly, in an open tuning. Sometimes friends imagined their kids had musical talent, and wanted me to give them advice about a music career. If they played a guitar I almost always told them to play in open tunings. I figured that way, at least

one chord was already made for them, provided they knew how to tune the instrument. It made the recital slightly less unpleasant.

Don't get me wrong, there are guitar masters out there who play open, like the slack-key master Peter Lombardi. One of the best session men alive. He would only agree to leave his massive Hawaiian bungalow/ man-cave—Bloomfield, he calls it, for no apparent reason--if we chartered a plane for him. He has a studio there, and expects everybody else to come to him, even though there is nowhere to stay near sweaty Hilo. But nobody else sounds like him. The more difficult and eccentric he becomes, the more the producers and rock stars want him on their albums. I don't suppose he works more than twenty days a year, yet he lives better than most of the guys I hired.

I liked Luke, and even though Anne had hurt my feelings a little, decided to be a good sport. What came out of his guitar case gave me chills. A National Steel, Model N, or maybe an O with a reset round block neck. 14 frets, tricone resonators, slotted peg-head. If there were five of these in existence, to say nothing of in shape to be played, I would be amazed.

"Could I see that a minute?"

He handed it to me. A Model 4.

"You know what this is..."

A little pissed, thinking I was taking him for an ignoramus: "Yeah, I know. It's kind of crazy for me to own something like this, but I had no idea what I was buying, and the guy selling it had no idea of what he was selling. From 'way back in my band days. I call it the Axe of the Apostle. We mostly played all electric anyway. No matter how hard up I got, I could never bear to sell it."

He tuned it easily, unassisted, knowing where 440 was, second nature, in that same automatic way a great bartender or outfielder works, with a natural grace. The 14 fret neck played clear and in tune all the way up the fretboard. Unbelievable, for an instrument of this age.

Luke started in on a little shuffle beat that quickly became a cover of Waits' "Get Behind the Mule". But not a cover; it was so sly, so sure, so seductive he took the song in a way that Waits himself never could have, past the Gothic and sometimes overblown darkness of his material into a jungle sound, the kind of song that made parents in the 1950's fearful of Negro Music. His syncopation had just enough looseness and defect to make it unbearably sexy. That sense of rhythm is purely instinctual, and one of the reasons why so few white people can play blues effectively.

"Damn, white boy, you does knows how to play dat thang." When he had finished.

Anne was smiling at me, as if to say, "See, I wouldn't try to stick you with some dummy." When I retrieved my old Washburn from my car, Luke said "that's a Model 5259, isn't it?" which was

correct. Not exactly something you'd expect an amateur, or even most collectors, to notice right away.

"Why is it that I have to fall in love with a couple of guys who have Guitar Asperger's'" joked Anne, who never paid attention to such things. She hardly remembers the model of car she owns. Luke said he'd always been able to remember stuff like camera filter sizes and the bulb designation for every light, it just came to him. It made life seem more orderly, as the same gift has done for me, as well. It's like the way I can transcribe for different instruments, almost instantly. I wonder if I had not been exposed to music or had had an education, I might have worked as a pharmacist, knowing every pill in every dosage on every shelf their white plastic bottles shining in endless fluorescent sun, and even the ones we didn't have but which were listed in the Physician's Desk Reference.

"Eric, sweetie, print out some music for us." Anne could not read music, but she wanted the lyrics. When we first began, I tried to teach her the rudiments of music theory, hoping she could learn to sight read, or even follow a chart. It was about as successful as trying to teach a woman how to read a map. Those were the only real fights we ever had. Bees, swine, and women cannot be turned.

"Tablature or sheet?" I asked Luke, inwardly cruelly, thinking, or hoping, he could not play from notation. A little competitive defiance in him, answering "Your call."

I excused myself for a few minutes to go back to the computer and work out a few 3 part arrangements, transcribing fiddle or banjo parts for the dobro, the male vocal lines for tenor and baritone. Especially in three parts, the vocal harmonies for the rural American forms have to be tense and argumentative, unless you want to sound like Roy Rodgers or the Statler Brothers. I knew Anne would not follow a chart, but she knew what to do anyway.

We started with the Louvin Brothers' "I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby", a duet Anne and I had enjoyed together for years. I left out a vocal part for Luke, but his dobro work slithered up and down the fretboard, doing everything the mandolin might have done, but smearing the sound with the right sort of smoky, mountain, aura that the often too jolly, even decorative, mandolin cannot express. I've always loved this Appalachian cracker white music, and the better country stuff. I am half white, after all, and those mountain folk were the niggers of their time anyway.

Annes' voice was a natural mezzosoprano and she carried the countertenor like the ghost of Ira Louvin, soaring in and out of the verses perfectly, accurately, like a little bat. She has one of those rare natural singers' voices that is not just pitch perfect, but has the gift of phrasing and timing that cannot be taught. I have worked with very, very few natural singers, and I know Anne's gift is one of genius. Had she studied, had she wanted that more than the money and the power that comes from acting, she probably would have been far more acclaimed critically. She is a successful actress, a star even; but as a singer, she would have been a legend. I could never get her into the recording studio, and on the few occasions when I tried to record something, she tightened up and lost just a fraction of the loose, supple tubular sound the diaphragm and throat of a great singer correct. Not exactly something you'd expect an amateur or even most collectors, to notice right away.

"Why is it that I have to fall in love with a couple of guys who have steel-trap minds?" joked Anne, who never paid much attention to such things. She hardly remembers the model of car she drives. Luke said he'd always been able to remember stuff like camera filter sizes and the f-stop settings for every light; it just came to him. It made life so much more orderly, as the same gift has done for me, as well. It's like the way I can transcribe for different instruments, almost instantly. I wonder if I had not been exposed to music or had had an education, I might have worked as a pharmacist, knowing every pill in every dosage in every one of those white plastic bottles, shining under fluorescent sun, and even the ones we didn't have but which were listed in the Physician's Desk Reference.

"Eric, sweetie, print out some music for us." Anne could not read music, but she wanted the music. When we first began, I tried to teach her the rudiments of music theory, hoping she could learn to sight read, or even follow a chart. It was about as successful as trying to teach a woman how to read a map. Those were the only real fights we ever had. Hear me, some old women cannot be taught.

"Tablature or sheet?" I asked Luke, knowing exactly, anticipating, hoping he could not play from notation, a kind of competitive defense of my own territory. "Your call."

I excused myself for a few minutes to go back to the computer and print out a few A part arrangements, normal sheet music for fiddle or banjo parts for the A lines, the male vocal lines for tenor and baritone. Especially in these parts, the vocal harmonies are the most American forms have to be loose and approximative, unless you want to sound like the Statlers or the Statler Brothers. I knew Anne would not follow a chart, but she knew what to do anyway.

We started with the Louvin Brothers' "I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby," a duet Anne and I had capped together for years. I left out a vocal part for Luke, but his dobro work slid up and down the bass end, doing something the mandolin might have done, but amplifying the sound with the pale wail of smoky mountain souls that the high folk, even decorative, mandolin cannot express. I've always loved the Appalachian country white music, and the better country work I see is half white after all, and these mountain folk were the singers of their time anyway.

Anne's voice was a natural mezzosoprano and she carried the counterpoint like the ghost of Ira Louvin, weaving in and out of the verses perfectly, accurately, like a little bat. She has one of those rare natural singer voices that is not just pitch perfect, but has the gift of phrasing and timing that cannot be taught. I have worked with very, very few natural singers, and I knew Anne's gift is one of genius. Had she studied, had she wanted this more than the money and the power that comes from acting, she probably would have been far more acclaimed critically. She is a successful actress, it is true, but as a singer, she would have been a legend. I could never get her into the recording studio, and on the few occasions when I tried to record something, she tightened up and lost quite a portion of the loose, supple tubular sound the diaphragm and throat of a great singer know how to make. Strange, for an actress. But I could have cured her of that with a little work. I've done it many times before. But she did nothing with it, never singing even once on screen. She had been given the gift. Her DNA must carry an immortality, the songs choked out of the dusty broken lungs of some unknown scots-Irish coal miner, one with the gift of song and genius, gone deaf and mad and ruined in the darkness there.

The rest of the evening went on like that, in a luminous haze a recording might have missed. Perhaps some mummy's curse would have befallen me if I had recorded it; it was too good. Perhaps performing that night was itself a curse because it changed so much. I consider myself to have a decent tenor, and Luke's easy baritone rode along with Anne and me through "Baby, Ride Easy", "You Done Me Wrong", "Killing the Blues", "Wayfaring Stranger", "Don't Let Me Cross Over", "This Old House", I'll Fly Away", and finally "Louisiana Woman/Mississippi Man" another old favorite of Anne's and mine, with Luke and I alternating the male verses. With a simple glance between us he could shift to the high baritone part, or I could cover the lower range, and neither of us had to think about it. Luke and I played and sang together like two who had accompanied each other for decades. There is a knowing when you play well with someone else, a choreographed dogfight in which the planes never collide, but which is not entirely friendly, either. Group improvisation, and improvising around written material is a natural contradiction in terms. And that is why when it works, it works so well. Everyone has equal pleasure, consideration of the others, and the whole enterprise become an organism much greater than the sum of its parts. You are always playing at the crumbled edge of catastrophe, when improvisation turns into chaos. The chromatic scales and all the conventions of musical notation give limitless creative room in group improvisation, but at the same time place safe limits and iron rules to keep the entire performance afloat. Luke played a beautiful solo version of Golden Rocket, Anne and I finished up with a few old cabaret numbers, because Luke asked us to. I could see she was feeling frisky and ready for bed.

I put my earplugs in this night. I usually fall asleep fast, moving seamlessly into dreams and solid sleep. No matter what is going on in or around me, I have always been able to find the little cave of sleep. That night I was simply too energized, I did not *want* to sleep, kicked the sheets, fell into and out of a light sleep, and finally gave up around 5 AM. I kept thinking of that National Steel. I had to look at it, hold it, smell it. I knew I couldn't play it without wakening Anne and Luke, but I went downstairs and took it out of its case. There is a cohesiveness and elegance to the design; flashy, of course, but with an aesthetic balance rarely seen in instruments made for playing popular music. The chrysanthemums entwine around the front and back, the fret board has tasteful, but not excessive inlays, unlike my Washburn, which was a little over the top in that regard. I needed to feel the slide round my finger, and opened the storage section in the nicely battered case. In addition to the slide, a capo, and a few picks, there was a black leather bag that looked like a pipe tobacco pouch. I opened it. I needed to touch and see everything, know more about him.

There are times we open doors and see things we wish we could forget, times we wish we could hit "rewind" and tell the engineers get ready for another take. This was one of those. I knew I had

crawled like a burglar into another person's room. I had not intended to steal, but I had stolen, this time a secret. A neat little package of China White, unopened, and a baggie full of sterile syringes. The two red lions winked at me.

Some recovered alcoholics just keep a few bottles around the house to prove to themselves that they don't need it, I told myself. Could be. Or not. I put everything back, went upstairs, and slept solidly until 8.

Let me tell you about addiction, which runs in my business. I saw my mother, saw her sick at breakfast time sucking down the brown and oily poison Sharon Old's father drank, and how it made her laugh or cry, or sleep. I have always skated around the cusp of that volcano, never quite falling in. I drink too much, especially now when it really doesn't matter any more. But when it did matter, there was always a guardrail, or a chickenshit gene, a switch that tripped and said "enough". Real addicts always lie. They say they've licked it, and a few of them do. But even those still want it, and lie to themselves and to the rest of us about their cure. Lying is a big part of life, we all do it, and in its milder iterations is considered courteous. Some people lie to their psychiatrists, which always has struck me as particularly droll and pointless.

Sunday afternoon, Anne and I watched Luke leave for New York. I did not have to leave until Monday morning. Anne seemed so happy and relaxed, I could not tell her about the guitar case. It was like having to tell a little kid on his birthday that his puppy had distemper and was going to die. There had to be a better time, I told myself. I gave her a goodnight kiss, and she kissed me back in a way that was not exactly sisterly. Every time I think I know her, she does something surprising. We spent that night in her bed, with the smells and tastes of Anne and Luke all around us. She wanted it that way, and she always gets the things she wants. That was the first and last time since the Thousand Days that we had been lovers. As we went to sleep, she said, "Eric, I think I'm falling in love with Luke."

"So do I."

We never lied to each other.

Sometime I wonder if I had not begun to court disaster after that. With Carol, I broke my diopter rule. Never share a bed with a woman who can not share your reading glasses. It is a formula for catastrophe. On top of that, she was married, and my student. Yes, I am an idiot. She was younger, attractive, obviously interested, and it flattered me. The fact that I was risking my job, not that I really needed it, added a soupçon of excitement to the situation. For God's sake, she was thirty years old, not a child, and what business was it of the University's if we cared to act as consenting adults? I am not one of those fools who need a younger woman to feel powerful and sexy. I like the way women age, the character that their faces and eyes develop, the sweet catenary curves of their breasts and bottoms. Women get more worldly, less hysterical with age; at least the good ones do. Carol had classical training as singer, but decided, wisely, on an academic and critical career.

She wore her learning on her sleeve a little too much, but I enjoyed her wit, and musical understanding.

About a month into things, I took Carol up to Vermont to meet Anne and Luke. I suppose I had built things up more than I ought to, because Carol was nervous and defensive when we arrived. She had been excited initially, and I had told her enough that she should not have felt jealous. Anne and Carol took an instant dislike to one another. Luke tried to be as agreeable as he could, but as I watched Carol looking at him, and Anne looking at the two of them, I could see that this had the makings of a very bad weekend.

Luke was using. I have developed a better eye than most narcs have. I can read the disparate and often unique tells. The jittery filthy street junkie is the thing of 1950's juvenile delinquent films. Clean heroin, dosed correctly and administered in sterile needles, is a congenial drug used undetected by countless high-performing individuals all around the world. But over time, it makes users, while not as obnoxious as habitual drunks, poor company. They function in their own interior world, the heroin world, where life is just too good to leave to talk to the rest of us. If a musician can control his habit, and maintain enough financial stability to use heroin sensibly, he can play at a very fine level for decades. They already live in their own world anyway. I don't think Anne knew, or wanted to know. Astonishingly, she seemed to treat Luke's disengagement as a rejection of her. Women always want to see things we do as a reflection on them.

Dinner was not too unpleasant, especially as I had enough to drink. Since I had written a very fine arrangement of "Hello Stranger" just for the occasion, two women's voices, guitar and dobro, I insisted we play it afterwards. Everything went wrong. Like one of those ghastly hot tub parties you hear about, nobody seemed to know what to do. Things like that just end in embarrassment and dissatisfaction. Carol knew how to read, of course, but still missed a few notes. She would never approach Anne's gift of phrase and timing.

We gave up early. As I went upstairs, Anne said to me, loud enough for Carol to hear, "Tell your bitch to learn that when the chart says A Minor, it means A Minor." Those are the last words I ever heard her say. Carol and I left early, before breakfast.

Part 2 Tangier

It hadn't worked out. With Carol. After our disastrous weekend in Vermont, things got more argumentative, and she started drinking, hard. Her husband did not want her back. She thought she was pregnant. (Wrong.) I wondered what I had been thinking. We left a bar one night and the car crashed. Really, nobody knew who had been driving.

What would you have done in my place? My Washburn was in that car, and Carol was dead. I missed the Washburn more. The Middletown DA was an ambitious little prick and wanted to bag a head for vehicular manslaughter. He tried to paint me as some sort of celebrity Svengali, luring a poor student astray. It took me a lot of lawyering up and a good part of my savings, plus the house

in Malibu, to tie up the loose ends. The girl was dead anyway, we were both hammered out of our minds. Nobody else was hurt. Could have been either one of us, really; me dead and her on trial. What would have been the point of locking me away for God knows how long just so the ambitious DA could have a wall trophy? So I won, won the only way I could, with my lawyers bringing out the abortions, the mental illnesses, the whole fucked up history of Carol's metastasizing torrent of bad life decisions that did not end until she did.

Both before and after the trial, I took the lawyers' advice and laid low. Tangiers is an amenable place, and the expats here consider it witty and profound when I look out onto the Med and say it all comes back to middle sea. I've been following up some on the work Paul Bowles did with the native music, and, yes, with the native boys once in a while. Life is easy, and the circle of fifths might describe what is around my living room these days. Not much work. Anne has had a bit of a late-career resurgence in Brazil, of all places, where she has become a TV star. I read about her in the industry press, and in the mainstream papers once in a while. Today I read that she and Luke were married in Vermont.

A private ceremony, with only family and friends.

DOUBLE UOGLOBE BRAND
100X

This story is dedicated to the memory of Stuart Graham, a man who knew about both life and music, and was thanked very little for any of it.

EUGENE ONEGIN

A Novel in Verse
by
Alexander Pushkin

Book 3
Part 1

Elle était fille, elle était amoureuse.
—Malfilatre

Rendered into English
by
S. Hamm

Literal translation
by
Vladimir Nabokov

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1.

“Just like a poet! Off and running . . . .”
“Goodbye, Eugene. It’s getting late.”
“By all means, go! But don’t be cunning:
Where do you keep this nightly date?”
“The Larins’ house.” “That *does* sound thrilling.
But given all the time you’re killing
Each night, it must be quite a chore.”
“It’s not.” “Oh, please. I know the score.
It isn’t hard to picture, is it?
Correct me if I’m wrong: I see
A solid Russian family
That fawns upon you when you visit;
There’s jam, and talk of flax, and cows—
The weather too, if time allows.”

“Whither? Ah me, these poets!”
“Good-by, Onegin. Time for me to leave.”
“I do not hold you, but where do you
Spend your evenings?”
“At the Larins’.” “Now, that is marvelous.
Mercy—and you don’t find it difficult
Thus every evening to kill time?”
“Not in the least.” “I cannot understand.
From here I can see what it is like.
First—listen, am I right?—
A simple, truly Russian family,
A great solicitude for guests,
Jam, never-ending talk
Of rain, of flax, of cattle yard.”

2.

"And what's so bad about it? Tell me."
"Well, boredom's bad, or so I hear."
"You fashionable types repel me.
I *like* a homey atmosphere
In which—" "Oh God, an eclogue! Stop it!
For goodness' sake, old boy, let's drop it.
And though I hate to see you go,
I hope someday I'll get to know
This Phyllis who's appropriated
your pen, your rhymes, your weepy heart,
Your brain, and every other part."
"You're joking!" "No." "Then I'm elated!
I'll introduce you." "Now?" "Why wait?
They'll gladly set an extra plate."

"So far I do not see what's bad about it."
"Ah, but the boredom—that is bad, my friend."
"Your fashionable world I hate;
Dearer to me is the domestic circle
In which I can . . ." "Again, an eclogue!
Ah, that will do, old boy, for goodness' sake.
Well, so you're off. It's a great pity.
Oh, Lenski, listen—is there any way
For me to see this Phyllis,
Subject of thoughts, and pen,
And tears, and rhymes, *et cetera*?
Present me." "You are joking." "No."
"I'm glad." "So when?" "Now, if you like.
They will be eager to receive us."

3.

"Let's go!" —And to their destination
They drive, and are at once beset
By the aggressive ministration
Of old-style Russian etiquette,
All ritualized and repetitious:
The jams come out in little dishes,
And then a fruity-flavored drink
(It's lingonberry, I should think)
Is served upon an oilclothed table;
The maids are gathered three abreast
Outside the door to judge their guest;
And in the court, out by the stable,
The grooms discuss the low esteem
In which they hold Onegin's team.

Let's go." And off the two friends drove;
They have appeared; upon them are bestowed
The sometimes onerous attentions
Of hospitable ancientry.
The ritual of the treat is known:
In little dishes jams are brought,
On an oilcloth'd small table there is set
A jug of lingonberry water.

[In little dishes jams are brought
With but one spoon for all.
Other occupations and pleasures
Are lacking in the country after dinner.
With snugly folded arms, at doors,
The serf girls speedily have gathered
To have a look at the new neighbor;
And in the court a crowd of menials
Criticized their steeds.]

Italicized lines come from the fair copy and were omitted from the versions of the poem published in Pushkin's lifetime.

4.

Our heroes hasten home directly—
The driver knows the shortest way—
And if we listen circumspectly,
We should hear every word they say.
“Onegin! Are you bored, my brother?”
“No more tonight than any other.”
“You’re yawning!” “As I’ve always done . . .
The fields are dark. We’ve lost the sun.
Drive on, Andryushka, make it snappy!
I hate this stupid scenery.
Reminds me of Dame Larin—she
Seemed pleasant, if a little sappy.
That lingonberry stuff she swills
Has got me green around the gills . . . .

They by the shortest road
Fly home at full career.
Now let us eavesdrop furtively
Upon our heroes’ conversation.
“Well now, Onegin, you are yawning?”
“A habit, Lenski.” “But you’re bored
Somehow more.” “No, the same.
I say, it’s dark already in the field;
Faster! Get on, get on, Andryushka!
What silly country!
Ah, apropos: Dame Larin’s on the simple side
But she’s a very nice old lady;
I fear that lingonberry water
May not unlikely do me harm.

5.

“So tell me—which one was Tatiana?”
“Oh, she’s the elder of the pair—
All sad and silent, like Svetlana.
She sat beside the window there.”
“You love the younger—?” “Yes, what of it?”
“The older would be *my* beloved,
Were I the poet. To be frank,
Your Olga’s features are a blank.
Her face is round and has no color,
Like a Madonna by van Dyke—
Or like that stupid moon you like,
Up in that stupid sky—but duller.”
The answer Lenski gave his friend
Brought *that* discussion to an end.

“Tell me, which was Tatiana?”
“Oh, she’s the one who, melancholy
And silent like Svetlana,
Entered and sat down by the window.”
“How come you’re with the younger one in love?”
“Why, what’s the matter?” “I’d have chosen the other,
If I had been like you a poet.
In Olga’s features there’s no life,
Just as in a Van Dyck Madonna:
She’s round and fair of face
As is that silly moon
Up in that silly sky.”
Vladimir answered curtly
And thenceforth the whole way was silent.

NOTE: Svetlana was the eponymous heroine of a narrative poem in twenty sonnets by Pushkin’s friend and contemporary, Vasily Zhukovsky, who had earlier translated Schiller and Homer into Russian. A dire prophecy almost scuttles Svetlana’s budding romance, but in the end she wakes up and all is well.

6.

Onegin's unanticipated
Appearance at the Larins' door
Soon had the neighbors agitated;
It surely augured something more.
Each day would bring another rumor,
More whispering, more nasty humor,
Till everybody in the know
Agreed: *Tatiana's found a beau!*
In certain circles, it transpired
The wedding had been long arranged,
Though recently the date had changed
So fancy rings could be acquired.
(Of Lenski, nothing more was said;
Poor boy, he was as good as wed.)

Meanwhile Onegin's apparition
At the Larins' produced
On everyone a great impression
And entertained the neighbors.
Conjecture on conjecture followed.
All started furtively to reason,
To joke, to judge not without malice,
A suitor for Tatiana to assign.
Some folks even asserted
The wedding was arranged completely
But had been stayed because
Of fashionable rings not being got.
Concerning Lenski's wedding, long ago
They had already settled things.

7.

Tatiana heard the idle chatter;
Though she was outwardly annoyed,
She thought quite often on the matter—
And felt perversely overjoyed.
The notion stuck. At last, she reckoned,
Her time had come, and love had beckoned;
A dormant seed had now begun
To quicken at the touch of sun.
Love was to her a grand abstraction,
In dreams she'd known it, strong and sweet;
And though she craved that fatal treat,
Her heart was shackled by inaction,
And none had come to set it free.
Her soul was ready. Where was he?

Tatiana listened with vexation
To gossip of that sort; but secretly
With joy ineffable
She could not help thinking about it;
And the thought sank into her heart;
The time had come—she fell in love.
Thus, dropped into the earth, a seed
Is quickened by the fire of spring.
Long since had her imagination,
Consumed with mollitude and yearning,
Craved for the fatal food;
Long since had the heart's languishment
Constrained her youthful bosom;
Her soul waited—for somebody.

8.

At last she knew the one who'd found her.
Her eyes grew wide. "'Tis he!" she said.
And now his presence hovers 'round her
All day; at night she lies in bed
And sees his face. Each waking hour,
Through some unceasing magic power,
He's there with her. She cannot take
The kindly speeches people make;
The handmaids' understanding gazes
Depress her even more. Her guests
She now ignores; they're aimless pests;
The lot of them can go to blazes.
She dreads their unexpected knock
And while they sit she eyes the clock.

And its wait was rewarded. Her eyes opened;
She said: "'Tis he!"
Alas! Now both the days and nights,
And hot, lone sleep,
All's full of him; to the dear girl
Unceasingly with magic force
All speaks of him. To her are bothersome
Alike the sounds of friendly speeches
And the gaze of solicitous domestics.
Plunged in dejection,
To visitors she does not listen,
And imprecates their leisures,
Their unexpected arrival
And protracted sit-down.

9.

How utterly she's captivated
By each delectable romance!
How thoroughly intoxicated—
She laps them up as in a trance.
In memory she inventories
The heroes of her favorite stories:
The man who loved Julie Wolmar,
Malek-Adhel, and de Linar,
Young Werther, suffering sincerely,
And Grandison, that courtly bore
Whom women nonetheless adore . . . .
At last the dreamer sees them clearly:
They're all, they've always been, the same—
Eugene Onegin is their name.

With what attention she now
Reads a delicious novel,
With what vivid enchantment
Drinks the seductive fiction!
By the happy power of reverie
Animated creations,
The lover of Julie Wolmar,
Malek-Adhel, and de Linar,
And Werther, restless martyr,
And the inimitable Grandison,
Who brings upon *us* somnolence—
All for the tender dreamer
Have been invested with a single image,
Have in Onegin merged alone.

NOTE: Julie Wolmar is the blonde heroine of Rousseau's epistolary novel *Julie, or the New Heloise* (1761); her nameless lover goes by the nickname "Saint-Preux." Dashing Muslim general Malek-Adhel courts Princess Mathilde, sister of Richard Lionheart, in *Mathilde* (1805), by Sophie Cottin. Gustave de Linar is the Byronic hero of *Valerie* (1803), by the Baroness von Krudener. Werther is, of course, the protagonist of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), and you have already met the eponymous hero of *Sir Charles Grandison* (1755), by Samuel Richardson.

10.

Tatiana knows the very heart of
Clarissa, Julie, and Delphine,
And mentally enacts the part of
The heroine in every scene.
She roams the woods, alone, enraptured,
For every book she reads has captured
Her secret dreams, her inner fire,
The boundless depth of her desire—
Just as in life, or slightly better.
A stranger's joys, a stranger's plights
She makes her own; she even writes
An answer to the hero's letter.
Whatever hero may appear,
He'll be no Grandison, I fear.

Imagining herself the heroine
Of her beloved authors—
Clarissa, Julie, Delphine—
Tatiana in the stillness of the woods
Alone roams with a dangerous book;
In it she reads and finds
Her secret glow, her daydreams,
The fruits of her heart's fullness;
She sighs, and having made her own
Another's ecstasy, another's melancholy,
She whispers in a trance, by heart,
A letter to the amiable hero.
But our hero, whoever he might be,
Quite surely was no Grandison.

11.

When writers burned with true ambition,
A lofty style would set the mood;
The hero was, by definition,
A paragon of rectitude.
Always unfairly persecuted,
This nonesuch would be constituted
Of equal parts compassion, grace,
And wit—behind a handsome face.
Pure passion burned within him, brightly;
If honor called for sacrifice,
He'd give his all, and not think twice;
And in the end we'd learn, quite rightly,
That vice is always beaten down
And virtue earns its rightful crown.

His style to a grave mood having attuned,
Time was, a flaming author
Used to present to us his hero
As a model of perfection.
He'd furnish the loved object—
Always iniquitously persecuted—
With a sensitive soul, intelligence,
And an attractive face.
Nourishing the glow of the purest passion,
Always the enthusiastic hero
Was ready to sacrifice himself
And by the end of the last part,
Always vice got punished,
Virtue got a worthy crown.

12.

We're in a fog regarding virtue
These days. A moral is passé.
In books, a little vice won't hurt you,
And oftentimes it wins the day.
The British Muse's flights of fancy
Have tainted, by some necromancy,
The dreams of girls; they idolize
The Vampyre with his pensive sighs,
Or Melmoth, cursed to roam forever,
The Wandering Jew, or the Corsair;
Or Sbogar, with his roguish air.
Lord Byron must have thought it clever
That shameless ego should assume
A mantle of romantic gloom.

But nowadays all minds are in a fog,
A moral brings upon us somnolence,
Vice is attractive in a novel,
There also it already triumphs.
The British Muse's never-haps
Disturb the young girl's sleep,
And now her idol has become
Either the pensive Vampyre,
Or Melmoth, gloomy vagabond,
Or the Wandering Jew, or the Corsair,
Or the mysterious Sbogar.
Lord Byron, by an opportunistic caprice,
Has draped in glum romanticism
Even hopeless egotism.

NOTES: *The Vampyre,* an 1819 novella by Dr. John Polidori, was based on "The Burial," a story fragment by his patient Lord Byron, and was in its earliest editions attributed to the latter. Its composition was begun at Lake Geneva, on the same weekend holiday that produced Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein. Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), by Charles Maturin, told of a man who sells his soul for an extra 150 years of life, and must roam the world until he finds someone who will assume his contract. The Wandering Jew mocked Jesus on his way to the Crucifixion and was cursed to live until the second coming; his tale has been told in various eras by, among others, Zhukovsky, Eugene Sue, Edgar Quinet, Shelley, Jan Potocki, Gen. Lew Wallace, and Pushkin himself (in an abandoned poem). "The Corsair," an 1814 poem by Byron, was the basis for Verdi's opera. Romantic brigand Jean Sbogar was the eponymous hero of an 1818 swashbuckler by fantasist Charles Nodier.

13.

So what's the point? If I were smarter,
I'd pray for heaven in its grace
To exorcise my poet's ardor
And let a new fiend take its place.
Apollo's fury notwithstanding,
I'll turn to prose—an undemanding,
Old-fashioned novel should do fine
To occupy my gay decline.
There'll be no twisty plot revealing
The secret pangs of villainy;
I'll give you domesticity—
A Russian clan that's full of feeling,
Young lovers in a dreamy haze,
Old customs from our bygone days.

My friends, what sense is there in this?
Perhaps, by heaven's will,
I'll cease to be a poet;
A new fiend will inhabit me;
And having scorned the threats of Phoebus,
I shall descend to humble prose:
A novel in the old mood then
Will occupy my gay decline.
Not secret pangs of villainy
Shall I grimly depict in it,
But simply shall detail to you
Traditions of a Russian family,
Love's captivating dreams,
And manners of our ancientry.

14.

I'll quote you Father's conversations,
And Uncle's, too—each word they speak;
Report the children's assignations
Among the lindens by the creek;
The jealous torments, and the breakup;
The tears of joy with which they make up;
The final spat they suffer through
Before I let them say "I do"—
All this in luscious language laden
With overtones of love ablaze
Remembered from my younger days,
When, at the feet of some fair maiden,
I'd talk a blue seductive streak . . .
Before I lost the old technique.

I shall detail the simple speeches
Of a father or aged uncle,
The children's assigned meetings
By the old limes, by the small brook;
Torments of hapless jealousy,
Parting, reconciliation's tears;
Once more I'll have them quarrel, and at last
Conduct them to the altar.
I shall recall the accents of impassioned sensuousness,
The words of aching love,
Which in bygone days
At the feet of a fair mistress
Came to my tongue;
From which I have now grown disused.

15.

Tatiana, dear! You see me weeping,
For I must watch you hand away
Your destiny into the keeping
Of this imperious popinjay.
You're doomed, my dear, and that's for certain,
But long before the final curtain
Your dazzled heart will know true bliss;
You'll taste life's sybaritic kiss.
Desire's poison kills you sweetly—
With every sip you'll see his face;
Each door you pass will hide a place
Where you and he could meet discreetly.
Go where you will, but know your fate:
Your patient tempter lies in wait.

Tatiana, dear Tatiana!
I now shed tears with you.
Into a fashionable tyrant's hands
Your fate you've already relinquished.
Dear, you shall perish; but before,
In dazzling hope,
You summon obscure bliss,
You learn the sensuousness of life,
You quaff the magic poison of desires,
Daydreams pursue you:
You fancy everywhere
Retreats for happy trysts;
Everywhere, everywhere before you,
Is your fateful tempter.

16.

The pangs of yearning still beset her.
Along the garden path she tries
To take a walk; her legs won't let her.
She cannot move. She shuts her eyes.
Her bosom heaves. Her cheeks are seething;
It's too much work to go on breathing;
Her ears are full of noise and blare;
She's blinded by an awful glare . . . .
The moon ascends as night is falling,
Patrolling its celestial sphere,
And from a darkened glade we hear
A nightingale's melodious calling.
When midnight finds her open-eyed,
Tatiana calls her nurse inside.

The ache of love chases Tatiana,
And to the garden she repairs to brood,
And all at once her moveless eyes she lowers
And is too indolent farther to step;
Her bosom has risen, her cheeks
Are covered with an instant flame,
Her breath has died upon her lips,
And in her ears there's noise, before her eyes a flashing.
Night comes; the moon tours
On patrol the far vault of heaven,
And in the murk of trees the nightingale
Intones sonorous strains.
Tatiana in the darkness does not sleep
And in low tones talks with her nurse.

17.

"I can't sleep, nurse; I'm suffocating.
Unlatch the window. Sit by me.
"Tanya, what's wrong?" "It's too frustrating . . .
Let's talk of how things used to be."
"What kind of things? Once I knew stories
In fifty different categories,
Some true, some not. I knew a host
Of tales involving girls and ghosts.
But now my memory's gotten blurry;
I can't remember yesterday.
A shame I've ended up this way—
Forgetful and confused . . . ." "Don't worry,
Dear nurse. Why don't you tell me of
Your younger days—were you in love?"

"I can't sleep, nurse: 'tis here so stuffy!
Open the window and sit down by me."
"Why Tanya, what ails you?" "I'm dull.
Let's talk about old days."
"Well, what about them, Tanya? Time was, I
Kept in my memory no dearth
Of ancient haps and never-haps
About dire sprites and about maidens;
But all to me is dark now, Tanya:
What I knew I've forgotten. Yes,
Things have come to a sorry pass!
My mind is fuddled." "Tell me, nurse,
About your years of old.
Were you in love then?"

18.

“Oh, dear. How could we ‘love’ each other,
When love’s a word we didn’t know?
God help me if my sainted mother-
In-law had caught me babbling so!”
“But how, then, were you wed?” “Well, Tanya,
It must’ve been God’s will. My Vanya
Was young compared to me, my dear—
And I’d just turned thirteen that year.
A marriage broker made the pairing:
For two whole weeks she came to plead;
My father finally agreed,
And I broke down in tears, despairing.
They wept as they undid my braid,
And marched me off to church, and prayed.”

“Oh, come, come, Tanya! In those years
We never heard of love;
Elsewise my late mother-in-law
Would have chased me right off the earth.”
“But how, then, were you wedded, nurse?”
“It looks as if God willed it so. My Vanya
Was younger than myself, my sweet,
And I was thirteen years of age.
For some two weeks came a matchmaking woman
To see my kinsfolk, and at last
My father blessed me.
Bitterly I cried for fear;
Crying, my braid they unplaited
And, chanting, churchward led me.”

19.

“And so to strangers I departed—
But you’re not listening, my pet.”
“It isn’t that. I’m brokenhearted;
Oh, nurse, I’m hopelessly upset,
I almost feel as if I’m dying.”
“My child! You are not well. You’re crying.
Your head is burning up! Dear Lord.
I’ve got some holy water stored,
I’ll sprinkle you. I’m at your service—
Just tell me what you need .” “Sweet nurse,
I don’t feel sick. It’s . . . something worse.
It’s love.” “It’s love?? Oh, saints preserve us!”
She raised her claw into the air
And crossed the girl, and said a prayer.

“And so they made me enter a strange family . . .
But you’re not listening to me.”
“Oh, nurse, nurse, I feel dismal,
I’m sick at heart, my dear,
I’m on the point of crying, sobbing!”
“My child, you are not well;
The Lord have mercy upon us and save us!
What would you like, do ask.
Here, let me sprinkle you with holy water,
You’re all a-burning.” “I’m not ill;
I’m . . . do you know, nurse . . . I’m in love.”
“My child, the Lord be with you!”
And the nurse, with a prayer, the maiden
Crossed with decrepit hand.

20.

“It’s love. I am in love.” With sorrow
She whispers to the ancient crone.
“Just rest. You should be fine tomorrow—”
“No! I’m in love. Leave me alone.”
And overhead the moon is glowing,
Crepuscular and chilly, showing
Tatiana’s skin, so milky-fair,
The halo of her loosened hair,
The pooling tears where she reposes.
The nurse, beside her charge’s bed,
A kerchief on her grizzled head,
Pulls tight her woolen robe and dozes—
And all the world around them dreams,
Bathed in the moon’s bewitching beams.

“I am in love,” whispered anew
To the old crone with sorrow she.
“Friend of my heart, you are not well.”
“Leave me. I am in love.”
And meantime the moon beamed
And with dark light irradiated
The pale charms of Tatiana
And her loose hair,
And drops of tears, and, on a benchlet,
Before the youthful heroine,
A kerchief on her hoary head,
The little crone in a long “body warmer”;
And in the stillness everything
Dozed by the inspirative moon.

21.

She roams, in her imagination,
To distant realms—until the moon
Bestows a sudden inspiration . . . .
"Go, nurse. I'm bound to doze off soon.
But first please bring me, if you're able,
Some paper, and the writing table.
Sleep well." Here, in the dead of night,
She sits alone. The moon's her light.
Propped on one elbow, she composes,
Thinking of Eugene all the while,
A letter; without pride, or guile,
Her maiden's heart she now exposes.
It's signed and ready to be sent.
My dear! For whom could it be meant . . . ?

And far away her heart was ranging
As Tatiana looked at the moon . . .
All at once in her mind a thought was born . . .
"Go, let me be alone,
Give me, nurse, a pen, paper,
And move up the table; I'll soon go to bed;
Good night." Now she's alone,
All's still. The moon gives light to her.
Tatiana, leaning on her elbow, writes,
And Eugene's ever present in her mind,
And in an unconsidered letter
An innocent maid's love breathes forth.
The letter's ready, folded.
Tatiana! Whom, then, is it for?

22.

Some belles are, in their haughty fashion,
As pure (and cold!) as driven snow;
They love their virtue with a passion
That minds like ours will never know.
Each time I met some modish beauty
Cursed with a sense of vestal duty,
I ran like hell—for when I'd see
Her face, there always seemed to be
A hellish warning just above it:
Abandon hope, who enters here.
The love of men they seem to fear,
But when we fear them, how they love it!
Perhaps along the Neva's shore
You may have seen their like before.

I've known belles inaccessible,
Cold, winter-chaste;
Inexorable, incorruptible,
Unfathomable to the mind;
I marveled at their modish morgue,
At their natural virtue,
And, to be frank, I fled from them,
And I, meseems, with terror read
Above their eyebrows Hell's inscription:
"Abandon hope for evermore!"
To inspire love is bale for them,
To frighten folks for them is joy.
Perhaps, on the banks of the Neva
Similar ladies you have seen.

COMPENSATION

A Play

by

Wesley Moore

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SCENE ONE OLLIE'S STEAKHOUSE

IN DARKNESS the sound of laughter, festive music, and the general hum of a busy Manhattan restaurant in the 1980's.

LIGHTS UP on SUSAN, MAT, and EDGAR seated at a red and white checkered table, sawdust on the floor, midway through a steak and potato dinner. Edgar sits between Mat and Susan, his back to the audience. UPSTAGE, a half-hearted attempt at Halloween decorations, orange and black confetti draped over the staid photographs of bulls on the wall, paper-mache masks have been tacked up as well. Though we hear the muted din of other conversations, we are in a private dining room, and no one else is visible, save a waiter every now and then, passing by the windowed-door stage right, wearing an oversized clown outfit and smiling clown mask.

MAT

And forever more...

(They raise their beer mugs in a toast, clink glasses, and drink.)

MAT

(Looking at Susan.)
To have finally met, I mean Edgar, now I understand...the delays.

(Edgar laughs, as he scoops up a large bite of his baked potato.)

SUSAN

Oh yes?

MAT

Now let me say upfront I am not a sexist in the least. I will tell you that right now, but is there a crime in being attracted to your banker?

(Edgar starts coughing. Susan smiles.)

MAT

Watch it now, Edgar, I mean I must have struck a cord here....huh?

(Edgar continues coughing.)

MAT(Cont’d)

Maybe we should have ordered the mashed potatoes like Susan.

(Edgar’s now clutching his throat, his neck turning red.)

MAT

Edgar?

(Mat stumbles up from the table and moves towards Edgar.)

SUSAN

Edgar, are you alright?

(Edgar is gasping, coughing, his arms flailing. Mat starts pounding his back. Susan gets up quickly from the table, and joins Mat.)

MAT

Oh, Jesus, something's caught. How could this happen now. The heimlich. Do you know the heimlich?

SUSAN

No!...Edgar!

(She pounds Edgar's back.)

MAT

Maybe a waiter, anybody!

SUSAN

(Yelling towards offstage right:)
Waiter! Waiter! Someone please help!

(Edgar is writhing in pain, clutching his throat.)
(The clown waiter rushes in from stage right.)

SUSAN

Please, he's-

(The waiter pushes Mat and Susan aside, rather brusquely, and grabs hold of Edgar from behind, wrapping his arms around his chest, in a tight bear hug. Edgar struggles in pain. The waiter suddenly lifts Edgar straight up to attention, sliding one arm up to his neck, and squeezing him in a choke-hold, as Edgar's arms thrash about.)

MAT

Jesus, no no, what the hell are you-

SUSAN

My god...

MAT

Don't you see?

(The waiter quickly pulls a 38 snub-nose revolver from his vest and points it at Mat, then Susan. They back off, as the waiter continues to choke-hold Edgar, when Edgar suddenly goes limp and slumps in his hold. The waiter looks down, drops Edgar to the floor, keeps the gun pointed at Mat and Susan, as he backs out the swinging door.)

(Mat and Susan run over to the crumpled body of Edgar.)

MAT AND SUSAN TOGETHER:

Edgar! Edgar!

(We hear muted screams of panic, sirens, as LIGHTS COME DOWN, which seque into the sounds of a slightly scratchy tape of traditional Bavarian music.)

SCENE TWO VILLAGE CAFETERIA

LIGHTS UP. Susan and Mat sit at a small formica table, harsh

lighting. A carafe of white wine, a couple of glasses, and in front of each of them, a tray of untouched food.

MAT

I used to pride myself on never having seen a dead man.

SUSAN

Mathew please-

MAT

No, if you don't mind, all through college into my late twenties, no real death, then I'm on a holiday by myself in Portugal and I look down this cliff and there's a guy, whose swimming around the rocks, in this violent water...he's waving to me...
I wave back...I look closer-that's his foot...
He's under water...he was dead. I still remember his fleshy back, ripped by the rocks, he was wearing blue jeans, nothing else, no shoes, shirt…I remember feeling very guilty as an American…about the blue jeans.

SUSAN

I guess last night beats that-

MAT

Why do you think we were spared? That's the strange thing. Did you ever read the Bridge of San Luis Rey? It's frightening...fate.

SUSAN

I don't know. New York has changed.

MAT

Has nothing to do with the city. Edgar was fed metal shards, for christ sakes.

SUSAN

And then this guy comes in with a gun to top him off, just in case.

MAT

Jesus.

SUSAN

Wasn’t even an Italian restaurant. I thought that always happened in dark-

MAT

It’s a goddamn chain.

SUSAN

Ollie’s isn’t a chain.

MAT

Yes, two of them just opened up. In Baltimore and Philly. A real waiter told me that while we were waiting for the police.

SUSAN

Mathew-

MAT

Call me Mat.

SUSAN

(Picking at her chicken.)

I didn’t think I could even come. Not that this isn’t nice.
I haven’t been to a cafeteria in years.

MAT

Thank you. No waiters. Refreshing, isn’t it? A little hobby I have, try to find the restaurant with the dustiest review in the window. I mean how can a place keep going not reviewed for thirty years if it doesn’t have good food? Word of mouth, right?

SUSAN

Right, but Mat.

MAT

Sometimes you get food poisoning, but only rarely.

SUSAN

Mat please, its hard enough to sit here-

MAT

Which is exactly what you're supposed to do, according to experts.

You haven't eaten a bite of your food.

SUSAN
It looks good. I just-

MAT
Odd he wanted to meet on Halloween.

SUSAN
It's when he felt most comfortable.

MAT
You were pretty close to Edgar?

SUSAN
Not at all.

MAT
Right, me too.
(Pause.)
Sort of a bastard, if you don't mind me saying.

SUSAN
Mat!

MAT
No...sorry.

(Pause.)

SUSAN
I mean he was, but he just died.

MAT
I feel so emasculated, like I should have tackled the waiter or something. I just stood there.

SUSAN
The guy had a 38 revolver trained on your head.

MAT

So what, I should have ducked. (Pause.)
You don't like to talk, do you. You're one of those people that internalizes everything, right?

SUSAN

I've...this has not been a good month for me. The work.

MAT

Of course, right the work...me too.
(He pours more wine into her glass.)
I mean this deal was everything to me. Is it dead...this deal?

(Pause.)

SUSAN

It doesn't look good now.

MAT

You know how long I worked on this, by myself, before I brought Edgar in? Three years. You know what it is like to get that many people, all the owners, young, old, crazy personalities, to sell, to secure that much of a block?

SUSAN

I know, it was quite a feat. Would have been great. Another renaissance for Hell's Kitchen.

MAT

Would have been?

SUSAN

Edgar brought the financing history, the experience-

MAT

The credibility. No need to say anymore. Mr. Amateur here, I understand.

SUSAN

Amateur? Not at all...it was bold.

MAT

You think? Bold?

SUSAN

Housing subsidized by retail, and in that neighborhood?

(She takes a bite of the chicken.)

MAT

You're eating.

SUSAN

Its good. Comfort food. You should try it.

MAT

(Picking at his chicken.)

Seemed appropriate.

SUSAN

(Smiles.)

I'm glad you didn't tackle the killer.

MAT

Why, you wanted Edgar to die?

SUSAN

Don't be absurd. But not only would that "waiter" have blown you away, I'm sure he would have shot me too....so thank you...you were a hero...in a sense...you saved me...by restraint.

MAT

Hmmm...restraint.

(Looking at the food. He takes a small bite.)

To heroes.

(Mat raises his wine glass. She starts to, and then puts her glass down quickly.)

SUSAN

No, I can't...that-

MAT

Oh...sorry...

(Put his glass back down on the table.
LIGHTS DOWN.)

SCENE THREE SUSAN'S APARTMENT

LIGHT FROM THE HALLWAY DANCES DIAGONALLY ACROSS THE STAGE, as Susan enters her dark apartment. We see a tall window with the Empire State Building visible beyond some roof-tops. In the dim light we can make out in her apartment a bookcase, half-full, a sofabed, a wicker chair, and a standing brass lamp. Mat appears in the doorway.

MAT
I see what you mean...right there. The Building.

SUSAN
(Turns, follows his gaze towards the window.)
I can see from the 83rd floor to the 102nd.

MAT
How did you know-

SUSAN
Counted down from the top. Sometimes this blonde amazon woman hangs her bras on the roof across the way, blocks roughly three floors.

MAT
(Surveying the apartment.)
Very nice, spacious.

SUSAN
Right.
(Susan walks to the window, and bends down, looking at the heater below it.)
Now if we hear a whoosh instead of a grunt, we're in trouble here. It always breaks down on the coldest days of the year. Forced air heat, don't ever move into an apartment with it...
(She flicks the switch on the heater.
We hear: WHOOSH.)

Wouldn't you know. Out of luck. Goes with the last two days.
(Flicks the switch off.)

MAT

(Laughing, walking towards her.)
I'm fine doesn't bother me. I grew up in Toledo.

SUSAN

Yeah, midwestern? Same as me. Kansas City.

MAT

And look at us now.

SUSAN

Yes.

(Pause.)

MAT

(Looking back towards the Empire State Building.)
How long does it stay orange?

SUSAN

Oh…a few days around Halloween. My husband, watched it religiously. He liked it best just after Christmas, when it was ice-cold blue.

MAT

So you lived here together?

SUSAN

About a year and a half. We were together for eight, but most of it in Chicago. I thought he was staring at that building for architectural insight, his profession, but I think he was just mulling over how best to leave.

MAT

Do you miss him?

SUSAN

Miss him? That's not an option.
(Moving closer to the window.)

This city...you'd never know on a night like this, what we just went through.

MAT

So quiet here.

SUSAN

Not always. That's the back of Gristede's right below us. Should hear the sweet wrenching sound of the garbage at five a.m..

MAT

I can sleep through anything.

(Susan walks towards the standing lamp, but Mat gently stops her with his arm.)

MAT

Please, not yet. I don't have a view like this.

(Pause.)

SUSAN

I tried selling this place, after Collin moved out.

MAT

Why? This is-

SUSAN

Almost had someone. A guy, late forties, divorced...says he has to bring his parents to see it...alright, turns out to be a sound freak...noises are everything...He's opening the windows at various heights. Almost closed the deal, but the garbage truck was late that morning.

MAT

You wouldn't have let him take the apartment.

SUSAN

Why not?

MAT

Your conscience would have grabbed you, at the last minute. Putting this sound freak in audio hell every morning.

SUSAN
What you don't know, might hurt you.

MAT
You should be on the other side.

SUSAN
Of what?

MAT
Real estate, developing projects.

SUSAN
No no, I tried that for awhile.

MAT
Really?

Susan
The irony is the only place women have gotten any power in this business is in the banks. Must be our foremothers...
(Looks towards ceiling.) Thank you.

MAT
But what kind of power is that really?

SUSAN
(Pause.)
Overseeing an asset portfolio of two hundred and forty million, gives you a certain sense of raison d'etre.

MAT
I suppose. But do you need that?

SUSAN
What?

MAT
A reason to live?

SUSAN

Yes, as a matter of fact, I do right now.

MAT

Me too, I'm searching for it.

(He moves closer to her.)

SUSAN

Here we are, still in mourning.

MAT

About alot of things.

SUSAN

I do feel sorry for him.

(Drawing a little closer to him.)

MAT

Me too.

SUSAN

I just wish we hadn't had to witness it all. To be part of it.

MAT

I know...like we've been tainted, or something.

SUSAN

Exactly.

MAT

(Moving towards her, slightly.)

To be cleansed, to be just rid of it. And feel safe, again.

SUSAN

Yes, safe.

(He touches her cheek with his hand.)

SUSAN

Mat-

MAT

I'm sorry...I just want to hold...to feel-

(He kisses her tenderly, then slowly pulls away.)

MAT

I don't mean to-

SUSAN

No...
(She puts her hand to his mouth.)
I don't either.

(She starts to kiss him, becoming more passionate, as she kisses his face, down his neck. She begins to unbutton his shirt. She gently pushes him back down on the heater, as she kisses his chest.)

MAT

Oh, God...

(The heater suddenly CLICKS ON. They laugh as she fumbles for the switch and turns it off.)

SUSAN

Too late...

(She pulls her blouse up as she presses down on him, her naked chest against his as the LIGHTS GO DOWN.)

SCENE FOUR SUSAN'S OFFICE, COLONY TRUST

LIGHTS UP. SUSAN, wearing a headset phone, sits behind a metal desk, a mass of papers in front of her, a small custard pastry, and a vase of faded roses. STAGE RIGHT, a small window, with the venetian blinds closed.

SUSAN

So why don't you pay the lien, end of story...Look at your agreement with us, no, the addendum, page thirty-because I'm not

like that...you can't commingle the credit lines I told you...look fellas...fellas, is this a conference call? No, this is me talking to you two, you want to argue, do it on your own time...right

(Punches phone console.)

That's right, not one of the guys, why don't you two go to some local locker room and have a brouhaha conversation then call me back, get it out of your system.

(TED enters, smiling, carrying a file.)

SUSAN

By the book is not always so bad in this city...ever read it...oh got another call...must be a legitimate deal...I feel it, it's one of my legitimate developers...Got to take it...yes, they live by their documents not their idle words...big difference, bye.

(Takes off the headset. She takes a bite of the pastry, then writes something down on her notepad. Not looking at him:)

Thanks, put the file over on the cabinet, tell Dianne hello, I owe her one.

TED

Sorry?

SUSAN

The Wells file. Aren't you from Work-Out?

TED

Actually, no.

SUSAN

Jesus Christ, what are you doing in my office. Willie?! I don't-noone cold calls me, he knows that...They said I only had a problem with female secretaries...until they tried him on me-

TED

I'm with the bank.

SUSAN

You are...oh...

(Looking at his casual clothes.)

I didn't recognize you.

TED

You wouldn't.

SUSAN

Really, what, you work after hours?

TED

(Laughs.)
That's funny actually I do, sometimes.

SUSAN

Oh great, so, I didn't give for the janitor's ball?

TED

No, it's just sometimes we stay late. I'm with the Compliance Department. Ted Ferguson
(Shows his bank ID.)

SUSAN

Oh, I see...Compliance. Didn't know you guys really existed.

TED

Well, here we are.

(Ted walks towards the window).

TED

Whoaw, you really do have a window. They told me you got windows up here. Look at that.
(He raises the venetian blinds.)
Let's see, just beyond that alley, is that a little bit of Third Avenue?

SUSAN

Don't have a heart attack, this was a larger office, split in two, that's why I have half a window, my predecessor obviously had more pull, or he lost so much money they cut back before I got here.

TED

Hah...that's good. Still, we just have fans down there, blank

walls. Can you imagine?

SUSAN

Listen, the bank has given me their condolences, see here's the roses still left over, I'm a big girl, I can handle it. I'm sick of the therapists, the cards, I mean alright I witnessed a tragedy, so okay, I'm stronger for it now, I will be a better banker, it'll all work out.

TED

Nice roses.

SUSAN

What?

TED

I like yellow myself, don't you? Or do you prefer the traditional red?

SUSAN

They're fine just the way they are. And if I don't get the time to catch up here-
(Starts to put the headset back on.)

TED

Hey, I know you've been through alot and believe me I have waited as long as I could, really.

SUSAN

Well I have given testimony over and over again. I'm sure you're copied on it. Don't you have the police file there? I'll get you one, save you some time.
(Starts to punch a number on the phone.)

TED

I've seen it. They're useless.

SUSAN

Useless.
(Takes her hand from the phone console.)
Look our in-house lawyers are low rung, compared to what's available on the Street, now I can't imagine that our in-house

investigators are much better- don't take this personally.

TED

I won't, I was on the force. So just a few quick questions, and I'll be out of here. I know you're a very valuable person, to the bank.

SUSAN

That's right. I bring in deals, so all of you can eat.

TED

(Smirks.)

That's wonderful. You're important, and so are your clients. Like Edgar Briller, at least we thought he was, right?

SUSAN

Hey, let's not confuse things here. Go mosey over to McPherson's office. My job is to close and bring points to Colony Trust, while figuring out where to put all the goddamn money people so foolishly put into our hands in this down market. You got that? Now, McPherson, he personally made sure his analyst cronies did all the background checks, they're the ones you should be talking to.

TED

And I will.

SUSAN

(Takes a bite of her pastry).

I was given a cocktail party, when I brought Briller into the bank, and set him up...Cocktail party, 34th floor, the Chairman was there, even Briggs. "Good work, high profile account" now he's a pariah...Mafia connections..."Oh we have nothing to do with him".

TED

This wasn't Mafia.

SUSAN

Sorry?

TED

Let you in on a secret: The traditional family's are dying, and this is not the way they do it.

SUSAN

Thank you. Maybe you should go back and work for the police, since that's the direction-

TED

I don't really care what their direction is. It's unimportant. Can we continue?

SUSAN

Oh Jesus, I'm questioned by the police, by the press, and now my own bank? Huh, is that what this is?

(Pause.)

TED

Look, if this is uncomfortable, maybe we can finish this outside these walls. Grab a coffee or something.

SUSAN

Are you kidding?

TED

Well, the bank has a right to protect its interests.

SUSAN

Bullshit! Where was the protection the other night at Ollie's? I'm lucky to be alive, I could have been shot taking care of my responsibilites for this goddamn bank. And this is what I get? Some reject cop coming into my office to badger me. I should be questioning the bank for setting me up, for putting my life in jeapordy over a simple fucking deal.

TED

Because that's what you were doing there that night, a simple deal for the bank, right?

SUSAN

Of course I was!

TED

(Opening up the file, looking down into it.)
According to these records, the Senior Loan Committee passed on the Briller deal ten days earlier. The deal was dead. I mean I know you're very important to the bank but when they say, "no", then it's "no", right?

(Pause.)

SUSAN

Right.

TED

So why were you meeting with Mr. Briller and Mr. Templer that night?

SUSAN

I...still had to keep a good rapport up with Mr. Briller. For Colony. At the time, we still thought that he was-

TED

A good rapport. I see. So it was maybe for new business? A new deal?

SUSAN

I could walk out of here right now, and get a job at ten other banks. You understand that? I could resign right now.

TED

I know you could. I realize you have good connections at all the other majors in town. You could probably bring immediate business to them. Hey, you could even bring this deal, the one that was passed on by the Committee, couldn't you? If you haven't already.

SUSAN

Get the fuck out of my office. Willie-

TED

It's just strange...I guess I don't understand your side of the game. It's all relationships, isn't it? You have dinner with Briller ten days after the bank has categorically said no to his deal, too risky, then, the night after Briller is murdered, you have dinner with this Mathew Templer, whom you ostensibly have

just met the night before. For what, more new business?

SUSAN

My social life has nothing to do with you or this-

TED

Oh, I didn't realize it was social. Sorry. It's just an interesting habit you have. Socializing with all these people whose deals have just been turned down, and I can't even grab a cup of coffee with you. But hey, thats why you have a window, half a window at least, and we have blank walls and a fan...long-term vision versus nose to the ground. Listen, get back to your phone and your custard, you're an important asset, and I'm just doing my job. Maybe we can finish this up sometime, when you're in the mood.

SUSAN

I think we're finished, thank you.

TED

Maybe even have lunch, with Mathew.

SUSAN

I don't think so. Good day.

TED

Whatever...See you around the cafeteria then, right?

(He leaves. Susan picks up the phone, then puts it down.)

SUSAN

Willie!

(LIGHTS DOWN QUICKLY.)

SCENE FIVE SHERIDAN SQUARE GARDEN

Susan is squatting, wearing a baggy sweat suit, slapping the soil with a trowel around a holly bush. Mat stands behind her, holding another small holly bush.

MAT

You don't have to shove them down like that.

SUSAN

In this atmosphere? They won't have a chance otherwise.

MAT

Look, my father was a gardener. Really a farmer.
(Bends down next to her, taking the trowel.)
We had a place just outside Toledo, and he would caress the earth, caress it...
(Gently tapping down the soil with the tool.)
There...and that little fella will be on his way. This is not some "credit review", you know.

SUSAN

I realize that. You don't think I have a green thumb, right?

MAT

I'm not saying-

SUSAN

No, go ahead. I've lost that side, the nurturing. What do you think I am?
(Susan puts her hand on his cheek, smiling.)

MAT

Settle down, it's only a plant.

SUSAN

I just want to give them the benefit of the doubt. We are surrounded by honking cars, air that is unsafe to jog in, and any moment one could be hit by a flying beer can. We're not outside Toledo.

MAT

That woman over there is staring at us.

(Susan looks stage left.)

SUSAN

Agnes!

(Waving.)

Yes, they're coming right in. Two weeks early, a miracle!

(Turns back to Mat.)

Chairwoman of the Sheridan Square Gardeners Committee.

MAT

Some day if you dig real hard, study, that could be-

SUSAN

Hey, I used to look down from my window at these people, every Saturday and Sunday morning reverently working over this ten by sixty plot of land and think how pathetic. I mean is this what it means to live in New York, to share this tiny piece of land with twenty frustrated gardeners? But then I came to a meeting, just to get away from Collin's depression one morning, and you get behind this iron fence, touch the soil...and you are away from everything, what you're becoming...even your own ugliness-

MAT

You're the furthest thing from ugly.

SUSAN

That's not true. At any rate, this is what we're all going to have eventually, right, just a small plot of grass. We're just ahead of our time.

MAT

That's an ominous thought...you're a model for the future of mankind, tending to the invalid earth...it's just when you called I thought, not that I don't like this, but I haven't worn hiking boots in five years...I was thinking more in the line of the Adirondacks.

SUSAN

This is the first time I ever let anyone in here, with me.

MAT

And I'm truly flattered.

SUSAN

(Staring at him.)
You got to be appropriately dressed. Don't want them to gossip even more. I'm already on probation. My daisies wilted last Spring.

MAT

Sorry to hear that. I could wait upstairs, you know, if you like.

SUSAN

Just wait for me in my bedroom, right? You know, my husband finally admitted that one of the reasons he was leaving, was that as much as he tried, twenty four hours after we were married, he was never truly physically attracted to me again. So what, that's eight or so years of fake sex. He must have just fantasized for years. So am I just some fantasy of yours? Fuck the banker?

MAT

Don't accuse me, you're the one that wants to only meet late at night, with the lights out. Talk about a fantasy.

SUSAN

You are a fantasy of mine...I admit it...don't try to become real.

MAT

Sorry?

SUSAN

No I mean...Mat...you're wonderfully not there. That's why we get along, I mean if I had to take you seriously.

MAT

(Getting up.)
That really is extremely flattering.

SUSAN

(Grabbing his legs so he cannot get away.)
Hey…
Should I take you seriously, Mat?

MAT

Why not?

SUSAN

Maybe you're not ready. All that I bring to the table.

MAT

I can handle it.

SUSAN

(Placing her hand on his cheek.)
I'm not sure.

MAT

But Edgar could?

SUSAN

(Retracting hand.)
What does Edgar have to do with this?

MAT

Nothing.
(Pause.)
Why did you sick that guy on me, if I'm not to be taken seriously?

SUSAN

I didn't sick anyone on you.

MAT

This officer, Ted, from the bank.

SUSAN

Oh…him. That was not my doing.

MAT

It's your bank...

SUSAN

It's not my bank. He came to meet me too.
(Suddenly turning stage right.)
Pick that fucking bottle up, now. What do you think this is some Federal chain gang working in here? We're professional gardeners,

that's right...Jesus...

MAT

Wanted to know why I wasn't at Edgar's funeral.

SUSAN

I didn't go.

MAT

He mentioned that.

SUSAN

Why didn't you go?

MAT

Probably same reason you didn't. Why the hell would I? Get mowed down by some Mafioso?

SUSAN

It probably didn't look good, Mat. You were supposedly one of his good friends.

MAT

Friends. This guy was my goddamm ticket! I had everything riding on him. He was alot more than a friend. He was my lifeline. I don't have to justify my absence at his funeral to anyone. Even you.

SUSAN

I agree.

MAT

So why am I always confessing to you?

SUSAN

(She strokes his legs.)

Why don't we get up to that apartment of mine and do some real cultivatin', Farmer?

MAT

(Smiling down at her, as he fondles her hair.)

Agnes is watching again. You’re going to be disbarred from the association.

SUSAN

Quite the player herself. Known to pick up from the garden here unsuspecting Swedish tourists.

MAT

(Looking down into her hair.)
Not to alarm you, but I think I found your first grey hair.

SUSAN

Pull it out. It's not the first.

MAT

I sort of like it.

SUSAN

(Standing up.)
Quaint, isn't it? All the more reason we better rush up to that apartment while we still have time.

MAT

Why? What do you turn into?

SUSAN

You wouldn't want to know.
(Taking his arm as they walk STAGE RIGHT.)
By the way, I want the boots kept on, the whole time.

(LIGHTS DOWN.)

SCENE SIX UNITED AIRLINES RED CARPET CLUB, JFK AIRPORT

Mat and Susan stand by the window, looking out at the airplanes. Throughout the scene we hear intermittently the harsh WHINE of airplane engines. CENTER STAGE is a conference table, with a briefcase below it. Ted walks in with a tray STAGE LEFT, carrying a bowl of peanuts, two cups of coffee, and a tall glass of soda.

TED

These are the good peanuts, just salt, not the sugar and the salt. Here.

(He places the tray down on the table. The other two walk over to join him.)

You know in some ancient cultures its considered heretic to eat sugar and salt at the same time. That's why they serve tea, in between. Do you all want some tea?

MAT

Which culture?

TED

Sorry?

MAT

Which ancient culture are you speaking about?

TED

One of them. How do I know. My job, I just hear things. Here's your Sprite. And Susan, you're coffee.

SUSAN

Thank you. Number one, there's no reason for me to be here, Number two, I have to be back at 2:30 for a-

TED

I realize that.

MAT

I've never met at a conference room in an airport lounge. I always wondered who used these things.

TED

It's convenient.

MAT

Convenient? Yes, much more than say your own bank, Susan can take an elevator down four flights, I could have taken a ten minute cab ride, instead I try out the JFK express train, wait another half an hour for a bus to take me a quarter mile from the station to

[illegible]

There are the good comedies, just awful, but [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] here.

([illegible] the first [illegible] in the [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] over to [illegible].)

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. That's [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. Do you all want some [illegible]?

[illegible]

Black comedies.

[illegible]

Sorry?

[illegible]

Which [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible]

One of [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible]

Thank you. [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. I [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible]

I realize that.

[illegible]

I've never met [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible]

It's incredible.

[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. I could have [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

the airport, fucking act like I'm taking a trip, when I'm not. I mean what a hollow experience. To come to an airport for a meeting, not to take a plane, not to pick someone up-

TED

Like Susan.

MAT

What?

TED

Like Susan.

SUSAN

What are you saying Ted?

TED

I mean you two were doing a business deal together. Didn't you travel-

MAT

No Ted, remember we met for the first time a week ago, and the deal was in mid-Manhattan. I think what you're asking is, am I fucking Susan?

SUSAN

Mat, please.

MAT

No, is that what you want to know? I appreciate a phone call, you know buddy buddy confession, I don't have to come out to goddamn Jamaica Bay to have this conversation. You know La Guardia is easier, did you ever think of that, or don't you fly much?

TED

This is more discreet, less conspicuous. I looked at La Guardia. The Admirals Club. But the windows in the conference room look right into the lounge.

MAT

Well its not inconspicous for me out here, Ted. I have friends, lots of friends who fly. West Coast, Europe.

TED

You do, but you don't.

MAT

What?

TED

Fly. You don't fly that much lately.

MAT

Not recently.

TED

And you don't have that many friends, good friends that fly to Europe the West Coast, making deals. At least not so much anymore, right?

SUSAN

Can I please ask-

MAT

No wait-what the hell are you-

TED

I'm just saying things have not been very good for you, lately. This deal going south, the death of Edgar, it hurts doesn't it?

MAT

Yes, it hurts. It hurts in alot of ways, fella.

TED

And if you add that to your early attempts at starting a record label for the homeless, the failed "Porto Lunge" ride for kids, well it gets to be a quite a burden I would think, to carry.

(Pause.)

MAT

I don't dwell on it every day, thank you. I can survive. There's always another way to make do.

TED

Which is your plan, isn't it? You two? Other deals?

MAT

We back to the fucking part again. Yes, Ted we're fucking. Feel good now? Have a peanut.

(Mat hands him a handful of peanuts. Ted takes them, nods.)

TED

Thank you...
(Chewing.)
Love salt...gonna get me in trouble one of these days.

SUSAN

Are you accusing us of some sort of crime, Ted? I mean I think we're the victims here, are we not? Did this guy not have more enemies in New York than has ever been recorded. The police say this. They don't know where to begin. He received threats from all branches of life, every known ethnic organization in the city, including one he founded, and yet you choose, or shall I say, the bank chooses to focus on us.

TED

The bank just wants to be thorough, that's all.

MAT

Thorough?

SUSAN

We're not criminals, Ted. Criminals are out there, on the street, people with political persuasions, we're the workers, we're the ones that keep this country churning, so somebody can come along and rip us off.

TED

The thing that gets me about you two, I'm sorry, is the lack of remorse, this man was choked to death in front of you, and yet you both can just carry on, well more than carry on.

MAT

What do you mean, Ted?

TED

Cavort...I guess the word would be.
(Laughs. Grabs a handful of peanuts and starts munching them.)
I mean, aren't you two worried at least? The killer's still "out there somewhere", as you say, isn't he?

MAT

Let me get this straight. You want to see us crying, and scared shitless is that it? Then you're happy? Then you've completed your job, your inquiry?

TED

Not exactly.
(He picks up the briefcase from the floor, opens it, and pulls out a file. He is looking through papers, letters.)

MAT

What's that?

TED

It's a file.

MAT

From the bank?

TED

Of course.

MAT

(Staring hard at the letters in the file.)
So...when were you put on this case, by the bank?

TED

What does it matter?

MAT

I don't know Ted, I think you're a very mixed up man. I don't think you know what you want.

TED

Oh yeah?

MAT

And those shoes of yours. Something about those shoes of yours.

TED

Not to your liking? Well we can't-

MAT

They're just not right. Meeting in these "inconspicuous places", maybe because that's the only place you can meet.

TED

As I say I was curious to see if you would both meet me out here. You did. That's a step in the right direction.

(Mat is watching him.)

MAT

I'll tell you a good step in the right direction. Shut the fuck up and call your superior.

SUSAN

Mat, what are you-

MAT

Please, I would like Ted here to contact the Compliance department of Colony Trust, now in front of us.

TED

I don't think you want to take this any further. Susan's position at the bank...

MAT

(Goes over, grabs phone, puts it in front of Ted.)
Let Susan worry about Susan's position at the bank, alright. Let's talk about yours. Call.

TED

I can't do that at this moment.

MAT

Alright then, I'll help you. Susan, the number for the Compliance department. Is it in that black daily reminder book of yours, you've crammed it with every other possible bit of information?

(Susan hands him her black book.)

SUSAN

Are you sure this is...

TED

I know the number if you-

MAT

Would make me feel alot more secure coming out of this little black book, but I appreciate your offer. Let's see...Billing, Credit...
here, Compliance...handy reference card, knew this book was good for something...682-4731-, right Ted? ring a bell?
(Picks up phone, starts to dial.)
Oh this is a good phone, ease of touch...maybe I should have more meetings out here. Ah...it's ringing.
(Hands the receiver to Ted.)

TED

(Into receiver:)
Hello...
(Pause)
This is Ted.
(Pause)
Ted Ferguson.
(Pause)
I realize that.
(Pause)
Because I have a friend here who wanted me to.

MAT

Give me the phone.

TED

(Moving away from Mat.)

Sorry to bother you...
(He hangs up the phone.)

MAT

Why didn't you give me the phone?

TED

No need to.

MAT

What did they say?

TED

Not much.

MAT

(Picking up the phone.)
Do we need to call again?

(Pause.)

TED

Ferguson answered the phone.

MAT

You're not Ted Ferguson?

TED

No, I'm not.

SUSAN

You don't work for the bank?

TED

No. Not to my knowledge.

SUSAN

Oh God.

(Mat shakes his head, and hangs up the phone.)

TED

But it doesn't make it any better for you two.

(Mat grabs his glass, and takes a long draught of his drink, as Susan stares at Ted. LIGHTS DOWN)

SCENE SEVEN   CAVERNOUS WAREHOUSE BUILDING

LIGHTS SLOWLY UP to reveal an empty warehouse room, large windows, brick walls, and stage left a man's body curled up into a fetal position, his back to us.

SUSAN enters.

SUSAN

Granted the gentrification slipped a bit to the left of here, but when you see the possibilities, these high windows, what a statement, a truly urban mall, this is not your everyday slam-dunk retail location, this would be your preeminent, your trophy location, if you will,ahead of its time. What a statement of confidence to the world. Look at us, look at what we've built.

(Turns, looks offstage right.)

Monsieur Chippereau, it's just water. L'eau. Step over it. Pas over it. That's it.

(A man in a dark tailored suit enters stage right, tentatively.)

SUSAN

And if we might reconsider a small housing component to the project, they would go hand in hand architecturally

(The man is pointing towards the slumped body. She is not looking.)

SUSAN

Plus you europeans have such taste, panache, what you could do with this raw, this untouched, this--

(She sees the body.)

What is this...

(Walking briskly over to the slumped man.)

I am so sorry....even our homeless are not as...uh..."gentille, n'est-ce pas" as your counterfolk...how crude, I am sorry. You see the need in the city?

(Stands over the slumped man, smiles back to the investor.)

Okay buster, let's move it out...

(Silence. She mouths back to the investor "drunk", she tips an imaginary bottle.)

I said let's beat it.

(She nudges him with her foot.)

Come on...

(No response.)

Get the fuck out of here!

(She kicks the man in his side.)

SLUMPED MAN

Ow!

(He turns, it's the MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON.)

Jesus, Susan, give a man some time to adjust.

SUSAN

Ted! What are you-I mean whoever you-

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

Big reunion last night, old friends, all felt sorry for me, went a little too far.

(The investor starts to walk quickly offstage left.)

SUSAN

How did you know I would be-

(Turns.)

Wait! Monsieur Chippereau. I don't know this man, well I do know him, but I didn't know...wait!

(She runs offstage left.)

SUSAN(O.S.)

Monsieur Chippereau!

(We hear a door close offstage. Sound of an elevator. After a moment, Susan walks in slowly, dejected.)

SUSAN

All through breakfast, croissants dipped in expresso which I hate,

I calm his fear of cockroaches, that it is not indicative of our fine city that a cockroach was slithering up his hotel room wall, an aberration, but I didn't think of preparing him for the drunk homeless man, no the homeless man who knows me by name, well that's great. Thank you.

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

I'm not drunk. At least not anymore.

SUSAN

(Looking out window.)

There goes the limo. Stuck in the war zone, with you, whoever you are.

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

Hey now, so I lied, so have you, so has Mat, what's the difference.

SUSAN

The difference is we're not trying to bug into your life.

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

Mat's not trying to bug into your life?

SUSAN

He was invited. First thing on my list this morning is to call the cops on you. So don't make it worse.

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

What for vagrancy, sleeping in an abandoned warehouse?

SUSAN

Impersonating an officer at a major bank has got to be worth something to them.

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

I doubt it. So this building is awfully close to Mat's deal. You know the one that was dead. May you rest in peace, Mr. Briller.

(Pause.)

SUSAN

When you get right down to it, this is a small city, isn't it? Now I've got to get back to work.

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

Right, the office, the real job.

SUSAN

Look, you don't have anything on me. I'm just helping a friend out here, before office hours.

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

Could that friend be yourself?

SUSAN

How am I going to catch a cab all the way over here.

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

Let's take the subway.

SUSAN

I don't take the subway with strangers. I don't take the subway at all since they changed the fare to a dollar. For all I know you're working for the people who killed Edgar, or maybe you are the guy who killed him. Who the hell are you anyway?

MAN WHO PLAYED TED FERGUSON

Dave Mackenzie, private investigator.

SUSAN

Oh right, "this gun for hire".

DAVE

Exactly.
(He pulls out the gun we saw earlier in the play.)

SUSAN

Jesus! Help! Help!
(She starts waving her hands towards the window. He quickly pulls her arm down.)

DAVE

Please...shshsh! I'm not going to hurt you. Noone's here anyway.

(He puts it back in his jacket.)

But you do recognize it?

SUSAN

What...yes...I think.

DAVE

The cops found the poor guy who murdered Edgar this morning. Suicide, hung himself. I got a tip before they got there.

SUSAN

You took a murder weapon?

DAVE

It's not a murder weapon, at least not yet. Circumstantial evidence, at best.

SUSAN

So who was he?

DAVE

You knew him.

SUSAN

What?

DAVE

Sammie Renton.

SUSAN

Sammie Renton?

DAVE

That's good Susan. Almost believable, but he knew you. Edgar's on again off again bodyguard? I'm sure he was with him on a couple of occasions when you came to visit Edgar at his apartment on Park Avenue. You know, when you came for the private loans?

(Pause.)

SUSAN

Who are you working for?

DAVE

Let's take the subway. Shall we? Its still an economical alternative.

(He leads her STAGE LEFT, as LIGHT GO DOWN.)

(LIGHTS UP. DAVE and SUSAN are standing, holding onto the metal subway hand-grips, as they sway with the train. The stage is otherwise in darkness, except flashing lights when they pass a station.)

SUSAN

(Looking around, leery.)
If somebody goes for my earrings, bring out that gun.

DAVE

Susan, how long you lived in New York?

SUSAN

Long enough to know you don't wear what I'm wearing on the subway.

DAVE

Why, you look great.

SUSAN

I don't have to listen to this-

DAVE

Sorry, just a complement. "Your hair shines like a-"
(Lost in SCREECH from the train.)

SUSAN

(Over SCREECH:)
What?

(Train comes to a halt. Sound of doors opening, then closing. Train starts up again, Dave just smiles at her.)

DAVE

I used to take dates on the subway, growing up. Didn't have a car.

SUSAN

Must have cramped your style.

DAVE

Not at all. The rocking, after a night out, really unwinds the-

SUSAN

That's okay. So you just accept the money in envelopes...no communication. Never seen the client and the client's never seen you.

DAVE

Right, that's the way I like it. Though the envelopes are starting to trickle in more slowly.

SUSAN

Let me take a look at them.

DAVE

Now that would be breaking the sacred code between client and investigator. Stronger even than between client and lawyer. Do you have the same code in your business?

SUSAN

You don't even know whose paying you, for christ sakes.
That's so mercenary.

DAVE

See we do have a lot in common.

SUSAN

I haven't done anything improper.

DAVE

Improper? Taking personal loans from a client-

SUSAN

There were no loans. I don't know where you got that. Edgar was trying to help me unload my cookie-cutter one-bedroom coop, that's all, in a overloaded market.

DAVE

And so you wouldn't sell it for a loss.

SUSAN

That's right.

DAVE

Instead you'd make a nice inflated gain.

SUSAN

Do you know how many ways there are to cheat a bank with a developer? Pad the budget, create line items, false draws. Do you see me wearing a Rolex watch, the common "gift" for people in my position?

DAVE

Your "gifts" are more hidden.

SUSAN

Completely separate from work.

DAVE

But if Edgar wanted to, I suppose he could hold this against you. And your pretty vulnerable right now. Didn't do very well in the divorce, architect-husband, rumoured to be having affairs, suddenly lands a high-profile job, through your connections, and manages to leave you high and dry. All you have is your glass-ceiling salary, I mean if Edgar were about to take you out of the deal, or threaten to bring this "help" public, or worse maybe want more for it than you were willing to dish-

(She slaps him.)

DAVE

You're right. Shouldn't travel the subway with strangers.

SUSAN

What are you trying to accuse me of now?

DAVE

(Smiles.)
Nothing. Really, I promise...

SUSAN

I've seen that look you've got, travelling up the ranks at the bank, the smirk, slightly amused, sexual, and it is completely inappropriate at this time.

DAVE

Not your type?

SUSAN

Absolutely not.

DAVE

You don't know your type, Susan. This guy Mat. Pure rebound material.

SUSAN

Is this conversation part of your investigation?

DAVE

Not really.

SUSAN

You've given that up, then, the proper investigation. The police have their man. They found the murderer.

DAVE

He fits the bill, cops found the clown outfit in his apartment. But he was probably hired to do a job. Always has been for sale, poor guy.

SUSAN

You telling me you knew him?

DAVE

I get around. Ah, here comes my stop.

(Train comes to a SCREECHING HALT.)

SUSAN

I'm calling the police when I get to the office.

DAVE

Please do. Ask for Randy McMahon in Vice Crimes. He'll give me a good recommendation.

(Sound of Doors opening. Dave steps into shadows.)

SUSAN

Oh yeah? You took the gun.

DAVE

What gun? I don't know what you're talking about.
(Smiles.)

SUSAN

How could you possibly think I'd be attracted to someone like you.

DAVE

Hey, now, don't treat me too badly, Susan. For all we know, I might still be working for someone at the bank.

(Sound of Doors closing. LIGHTS OUT on Dave, then LIGHTS OUT on SUSAN.)

SCENE EIGHT THE TEMPO ATHLETIC CLUB

LIGHTS UP. Dave is sitting rigidly upright in a lounge chair, with a white terri cloth robe, the Tempo clenched fist insignia prominently displayed in front, tightly wrapped around him. To his right is an exercise bike.

Mat walks in, shaking his wet hair, wiping himself off, with a towel, wearing a white robe also.

MAT

Try the facilities?

DAVE

No.

MAT

You strike me as a steamer.

DAVE

Sorry?

MAT

Steam man, as opposed to sauna. Fits your character.

DAVE

I see.

MAT

You look uncomfortable, Dave Mackenzie. Jesus, all grind, I thought this would be a break for you...work, work, work...you might think more clearly.

DAVE

That right?

MAT

Yeah. It's done wonders for me.

DAVE

I can see that. But we could have met at my office.

MAT

(Looking around, eyeing the other members offstage.)
I called the meeting, remember? Anyway you don't have one.

DAVE

Excuse me?

MAT

You don't have one. Oh, I suppose you could rent one for the day, sort of like the Red Carpet Club fiasco, but that wouldn't be wise, because you owe the Fender building six months back rent, they evicted you, times are tough, aren't they Davey? New York is not an easy place to run a small-time operation.
(Waves to someone offstage.)

DAVE

(Pause.)
You don't have an office, either.

MAT

(He walks over to the exercise bike, and climbs on.)
That's no secret. I'm not the one with secrets. I work out of my apartment on East Eighty-Ninth street. Remember my big deal went south, temporarily, temporarily, but you Dave, trusted right hand man, a P.O. box for an address, always a tell-tale sign, doesn't invoke deep trust from me, wouldn't want to reveal my life-long secrets to a P.O. box investigator. By the way, was it your client's idea for you to masquerade as a bank officer?

DAVE

Why do you care?

MAT

An interesting choice, that's all.

(Pause.)

DAVE

Came up with that, all on my own.

MAT

Creative...man of many masks.Don't even share your real voice on your message machine, sounds like one of those pre-recorded tapes you buy at Walgreen's, so official sounding, the beeping of non-existent computers in the background, the woman's voice, "If you would like to leave a message", doesn't sound like she's from New York, or maybe that's your wife, oh, that's right, you're divorced. It must get lonely then. Now that explains alot, doesn't it?

DAVE

Very good, Mat. I'm impressed, a little amateurish, but-

MAT

How so?

DAVE

No date on the divorce for one thing.

MAT

Sorry. Spring, 1983. Didn't I mention it?

DAVE

(Laughs.)
Excellent.

MAT

(Playing with the bicycle chain.)
You think you could help me adjust this? I bet you're good with your hands.

DAVE

(Stares at him for a moment, considering, then gets up off the chair.
Sure.

MAT

Thanks a lot. Never been much of handyman.

(Dave fixes the chain.)

DAVE

You want it harder or easier.

MAT

Harder, don't you think?

DAVE

I don't know, Mat, guy like you. Peddling awfully fast already.

MAT

You think so?

DAVE

You need one of those personal trainers. They have them here?

MAT

Of course.

DAVE

You ever use one?

MAT

What are you driving at Dave?

DAVE

Let's face it, how long do you think this is going to last?

MAT

What?

DAVE

All of this.
(Waves his hand, taking in the club.)
The memberships, the gold credit cards. The rate you're going-

MAT

Listen, pal, most people would feel privileged, or at least act a little gracious about being invited to the Tempo Athletic Club, not grill me on my financial status, but since that is your nature, twenty four hours a day, let's just say I have been able to tuck some money away. No retirement fund, but enough to ride on it for awhile, enough to take Susan out, much to your chagrin.

DAVE

(Laughs.)
Smooth, you are a work of art.
(Starts clapping his hands.)
A masterpiece, really. Down even to the manicured toenails.

MAT

(Looking around.)
Hey, cut the clapping out, alright. Not club behavior. I guess you wouldn't know that. (He starts peddling the bike.)

DAVE

(Sits back down on lounge chair.)
I guess not, Mathew Templer. But you better watch it. What if some guy happens to come along and ever so slightly nudge that intricate edifice you've built for yourself?

MAT

You want to destroy my life? Is that what this is about? That's been done, Dave, some fucker took away my ticket with a choke-hold.
But I got news for you.
(Patting his own chest.)
This guy's not going to be put down. You'd be surprised what's under that, as you say, "edifice".
(Peddling faster.)

DAVE

I don't think so.

MAT

(Stops peddling. Gets off the bike.)
I guess Edgar's front was so rock hard, he had to be fed metal shards, choked, and then if that didn't work, carry a gun along to finish him off, but with me, it just takes a little nudge, is that right?

DAVE

That's exactly right.

MAT

Is that what you want to do then, Dave, blow me away?
(Stands in front of Dave, and opens up his robe.)
You interested in blowing me, Dave?

DAVE

(Pushing him away.)
Get the fuck away from me!

MAT

Yes, Dave, I know that's not your style. You're just a pudgy little jealous kind of guy, you're so low on the totem pole, you don't even know whose hired you, at least that's what you tell us, then you see this attractive banker woman, she's part of the package, and you say to yourself, "I'm going to stay in this, maybe I can rub along this thing, get some heat, why does he get to fuck her, this fake nobody, and trusty old Dave can't".

DAVE
I'm not interested in fucking her.

MAT
Yes you are, Dave. Let's be honest with eachother, huh?

(Pause.)

DAVE
You're good with people, Mat. Sure, I wouldn't mind making love to her.

MAT
(Sitting down on the lounge chair next to him.)
And making love is exactly what it is with Susan, Dave. You and I are so similar.

DAVE
No, we're not.

MAT
Christ, if you had been at that restaurant that night, who knows maybe you'd be the one.

(Pause.)

DAVE
Done some homework on me, Mat. What for? What are you afraid of?

MAT
Fear is not what we're talking about here.
(He reaches into his robe.)

(Dave jumps to get up, but Mat pushes him down.)

MAT
Settle down Dave. Get a grip on.
(Pulls out a checkbook and a pen.)
Just a checkbook. Weapon of the powerful.
(Starts writing out a check.)

DAVE

What are you doing?

MAT

Paying you.

DAVE

For what?

MAT

I'm making a deal here.

DAVE

I'm not interested.

MAT

Oh come on, you told Susan you're accepting cash from some unknown source. Are you still being paid, Dave?

DAVE

That's none of your business.

MAT

Well in this case, you know exactly where the money is coming from, and the job is much much easier.

DAVE

What's the assignment?

MAT

To get the fuck out of our lives. Simple enough, even for you Dave.

DAVE

You have no idea what you're dealing with-

MAT

I agree. So how much, Dave? How much are they paying you, if they are still paying you?

DAVE

That's my little secret.

MAT

Right...I'll pay double. See, I left the amount blank. Help me.
(Pause.)
One hundred...one fifty...I'll take a stab at it. Two thousand.
(Finishes writing the check, and offers it to Dave. Dave doesn't move.)
Don't worry. It won't bounce.

(Dave stares at it, then pushes it away.)

(Pause. Mat puts the check back in the checkbook.)

MAT

Well, I guess that doesn't really surprise me.

DAVE

No?

MAT

(Puts the checkbook and pen back in his robe.)
No...This is getting too personal, Dave.

DAVE

You're the one that wanted to meet at a health club.

MAT

I mean the fact that you just won't quit. You must be trying to prove something. I'm a failure, as you say, ready to be flattened by the next heavy gale that comes through town, but you...well Dave-

DAVE

My reputation as an investigator-

MAT

No doubt, but that comment to Susan about the family's are dying, and this is not like them. That really struck me.
(Leaning towards him, softly:)
We talk about alot of things in bed.
(Now normal voice:)
You've got some pretty shady beginnings there, Dave.

DAVE

(Getting up.) If this is why you wanted to meet-

MAT

(Gently pushing him back down in the chair.)
No no...I mean, you must know alot of hit men, don't you, from those days.

DAVE

(Standing up.)
You gotta be kidding.

MAT

I love that telling Susan you were on the force, a little stretch of the definition there, but that's okay, we're all into making ourselves look better than we really-

DAVE

(Suddenly grabs him by the throat with one hand.)
Listen, you little cunt, I gotta past, and you should be afraid of it, because I could twist your jugular in front of your friends here...How would that look? Thing is at least I know who I am. Everything you do is almost. You're the Almost Man. Aren't you?

MAT

(Gasping, whispers hoarsely:)
Let go of me.

DAVE

(Still holding tightly his neck.)
You'd be surprised what Susan tells me. Why don't you put your little farmer boots on.

MAT

(Choking:)
Why you-

(Mat grabs hold of Dave. They struggle with eachother, wrestling, Dave throws Mat off of him, but Mat holds onto Dave's robe, pulling it wide open, revealing Dave's back, and chest, heavily scarred.)

MAT

Jesus...

(Dave quickly closes the robe again, tightly around his body.
Pause.)

DAVE

You ready to talk now?

(LIGHTS DOWN.)

SCENE NINE MAT'S STUDIO APARTMENT

Door opens STAGE LEFT, casting LIGHT on heaps of clothes everywhere, as Susan walks in. Mat is curled up on top of his bed, fully clothed.

SUSAN

Mat?
(Pause.)
Mat?!

(He turns to face her.)

SUSAN

Oh…this lady just let me in, and I was going to knock but you left the door open.

MAT

That's right.

SUSAN

You really shouldn't do that here, I mean what if-

MAT

(Turning towards her on the bed.)
What if "who" came in...huh...what could be more dangerous than what came in?

SUSAN

Let me get some light in here.
(She walks towards the curtained window, center stage.)
My god, now I know why you never let us meet here, I mean you must have a closet for all these clothes.

(Mat suddenly jerks up.)

MAT

Don't! Please...its better this way....I don't have a view, like you, its just a brick wall on the other side.
(Settling back down into his bed.)
Someone painted a corn field on it as a joke. But it's fading.

SUSAN

I waited an hour outside the movie theatre. Got there early...
(Pause.)
Are you sick?

MAT

Sick?
(Laughing sadly.)
Yeah...I'm sick, honey. Twist it in deeper. Sorry about the no-show, not like me...

SUSAN

No...I can understand.

MAT

So very understanding, aren't you Susan. Such a warm caring individual.

SUSAN

Listen I'm the one that should be mad here.

MAT

(Gets up off bed, and approaches her.)
No! Don't you know what you did to me! Huh...above all the other things you've done, I want to thank you, Susan. I mean I thought I had a unique gift for fucking up my life, for making the wrong choices, but sweetheart you brought a new art to it altogether.

SUSAN

Look, I came over because I was concerned about you. Swallowed my pride, and I'm not going to listen to this.
(Starts to leave.)

MAT

Oh yes you are.
(Grabbing her.)

SUSAN

Get off of me!

MAT

Was it all part of a plan of yours? Huh, to give me a motive? That's really beautiful.

SUSAN

Motive?

MAT

That's right. A very real motive, coupled with my checkered past, which you found so appealing, because of its utter banality, and lady you got me in serious trouble, with a fucking hound dog that will not stop, dog from hell, I mean what is this guy?

SUSAN

You've seen Dave?

MAT

Yes Davie and I had a heart to heart, it took awhile, had to expose his scars, did you know that about Dave? I had my suspicions, and now it makes so much sense...you turned on me, Susan. And Edgar...my God, if I had known, I would have helped choke the man...I would have shoved those metal shavings down his throat myself...and maybe you, for that matter...

SUSAN

Look, Mat, the deal was dead long before Halloween. I don't know why he wanted us all to have dinner that night. It was perverted.

MAT

The deal wasn't dead! It's alive and kicking, screaming!

SUSAN

Look that deal was dead. When Colony passed on it, Edgar and I were just seeing if it could be resuscitated at another lending house.

MAT

You mean my deal!

SUSAN

Bullshit. Noone owns a deal. You were excess baggage, I'm sorry, Mat, but that's what you looked like to Edgar. You needed him...and you had no contract with him.

MAT

We had a contract.

SUSAN

An oral agreement. A handshake, big deal.

MAT

That's how Edgar works.

SUSAN

You bet it's how he works, to screw guys like you. You believe in this handshake bullshit? That's one thing we have brought to this world, you got to have the documents, we can't go to the urinals and the lunch clubs, so we want the documents.

MAT

Stop talking like you represent the modern American business woman, you're a pariah. You're all by yourself, separate category.

SUSAN

I have never been offerred that size of a transaction. So when McPherson, the jealous S.O.B. passed on it in the Committee, I wasn't about it to just let it go. I tried to set it up across town. Was going to take a finders fee, just to spite him.

MAT

"Was going to"?

SUSAN

That's right.

MAT

So why were you down on Eleventh Avenue, showing the old Miller warehouse before office hours?

SUSAN

Give me a break, Mat. You and Dave are just so tight now, huh?

MAT

Look, I have every right-

SUSAN

You have no "rights" here-

MAT

What are you saying? You know how much this meant to me. You told me to hold off. Hold off!

SUSAN

Your deal didn't work, didn't fund. It was flawed.

MAT

So you decide-

SUSAN

New York doesn't need a planned community, the subsidized housing was too big of a thrust, you had no real motor. The project would have deteriorated like all the rest, be riddled with crime, "For Lease" signs in all the white-washed windows, a huge mid-town eyesore.

MAT

But a giant megaplex retail outlet, that is what we need.

SUSAN

That's what we want. Fuck what we need. Another place to live, when we can shop instead? I started to change the deal with Briller after your good samaritan community idea tanked. I was going to bring you into it later.

MAT

Later?

SUSAN

Yes. I was trying to finesse some of your housing concept back into it, on a smaller scale, after I had them hooked.

MAT

Why wait to bring me back in?

SUSAN

Frankly, after I knew you couldn't screw it up.

MAT

Well thank you.

SUSAN

I'm sorry, Mat. It's just hard for me to trust.

MAT

Trust? I work on this three years, you work on it for say four weeks, and you tell me maybe I can be-

SUSAN

Four weeks? For years I've been creeping up, ever so slowly, through the ranks at that damn bank, coddling and grooming my artsy husband, and then he's gone. So why can't I just once, grab something for myself. Cross over the line. Just once. Don't I deserve that?

(Pause.)

MAT

I guess you do.

SUSAN

(Moving away.)
Do I?

MAT

If that's what you want.

SUSAN

You know what first attracted me to you? How easy you were to pull off the deal. How vulnerable you were.

MAT

So, to become your innocuous playmate?

SUSAN

I don't mean that. You didn't seem to have a hidden agenda, like everyone else in my life, like my husband.

MAT

Like you?

SUSAN

Yes, then, like me.

(She starts to move closer to him.)

You have these ideals, so refreshing. You believed in this project like it was the Second Coming. That's why the last few days, you've given me some perspective, helped me start to step back from it.

(Gently puts her arms around him.)

I want to get away for awhile...I just want to wrap myself in you, in your dreams.

MAT

But this was my dream.

SUSAN

If you have to have a deal, a real estate deal to make you feel like a man, in front of Dave, and you don't like what this one's become, I got twenty on my desk-

MAT

You're attracted to him.

SUSAN

Who? Dave? No way, whatsoever.

MAT

You are. He's as crass as you.

SUSAN

Maybe, but I wasn't always like this.
This is why I need to get away, get out of New York.

MAT

Just leave?

SUSAN

Let's travel for weeks. I know this advertising couple they scoured the world for two years. Stopped where they wanted, house-sat, odd jobs, moved on to the next country. Completely lost their old selves.

MAT

I've lived that kind of life, that is my life...rambling aimlessly. I want structure. I want to build a foundation, finally.

(Pause.)

SUSAN

I am truly sorry, Mat...I don't know what's become of me
(Moves away from him.).
It should have been me that night, shouldn't it, instead of Edgar?

MAT

No...you're not that gone yet, Susan.

SUSAN

Yes...yes I am.

MAT

Look, we've all done things here that we're not proud of.

SUSAN

You haven't.

MAT

No, I have. But I got what I deserved. Novice with a good idea. Pick Edgar Briller to get in bed with, a guy screwing people all over town, and look what happened to him...

(Mat moves towards her, puts his arm around her.)

SUSAN

I need you, Mat. I need this to be me more than the two of us, on our own.
Help me, Mat…

MAT

Help you. I think I'm falling in love with you, you bitch.

SUSAN

Never heard it said quite like that.
(They come together, slowly, hug.)
I just...I was so worried that maybe when you didn't show.
That the worst...

MAT

No no...I'll be around for a long time coming. Don't worry.

SUSAN

I just want to...to be transformed. To meld into-

(They start to kiss, passionately, and ease back down on the bed. LIGHTS DOWN.)

SCENE TEN OLLIE'S STEAKHOUSE

We hear laughter, voices, the din of a Manhattan restaurant. LIGHTS UP. The same private dining room, but the halloween decorations are not there. Mat, Susan, and Dave sit at the table, Dave between them. Dave faces the audience.

MAT

I don't remember that grease spot on the wall, last time. Looks better at Halloween, don't you think, Susan? Less pedestrian.

SUSAN

Amazing how many people are eating here. As if nothing happened. Treading over his grave.

DAVE
Still not the same as before.

MAT
Another reason you took the case, Dave, to clean up the restaurant's tarnished image.

DAVE
Not exactly.

MAT
Well it's an interesting ploy, reinventing the night here, watching our every move.

DAVE
That's not my intention in the least. I just thought it was an appropriate place to meet. It's a good restaurant.

MAT
Aren't you surprised we accepted?

DAVE
Not really.

SUSAN
I'm not a big steak-eater.

DAVE
So this was the room then?

MAT
That's right. And Susan was sitting over there, me here.

DAVE
And Edgar here? Oh now, let me move.
(Starts to get up.)

MAT
Superstitious? Hah, no wait, wait, Dave-

SUSAN

It was the other chair.

MAT

Right...nothing to fear.

DAVE

(Sitting back down.)
Fine..well then, are you all hungry?

SUSAN

Not especially.

DAVE

I'm famished and we have alot to celebrate. Waiter!

SUSAN

Celebrate?

(A waiter comes rushing through the swinging door stage right. Both Susan and Mat get up, frightened.)

DAVE

It's alright, really.

(They both sit down, looking up at the waiter, who only smiles.)

DAVE

A bottle of champagne please.

SUSAN

Champagne?

MAT

We were having beer that night.

DAVE

Not appropriate tonight.
(To the waiter.)
Champagne.

(The waiter nods, and walks back out the swinging door.)

MAT

Feeling a little flush?

DAVE

I think celebrations are in hand.

MAT

Getting re-married, Dave?

DAVE

I wish. No, I'm dropping the case.

SUSAN

Dropping the case, why?

MAT

Putting us out to pasture, Dave? Now, after all this?

DAVE

Well I didn't expect this reaction.

SUSAN

Are we that uninteresting? On to a new lead?

MAT

I know you'll find this hard to believe, but we're going to miss you, Dave.

DAVE

You know, I had a girlfriend in college...I did go to college, you probably both know that by now.

MAT & SUSAN

State at Stony Brook.

DAVE

Hah, well you might not have found in your research, that I had this girlfriend, Tracey. And senior year-

(Waiter comes in with a bottle of champagne and three champagne flutes.)

Ah here we are...

(The waiter places the flutes on the table, and starts to unravel the foil.)

No, please, let me do the honors.

(The waiter hands him the champagne.)

Thank you. They'll order in a bit.

(The waiter nods again, and exits. Dave pulls off the foil.)

Tracey was a sculptor, and I fell for her, never met a sculptor before, but it turns out she had an ex-boyfriend, she had failed to tell me about, who refused to remain an "ex". I mean this guy hounded us everywhere, following us, whining, calling her late at night, really trying to destroy the budding relationship we had.

(Dave struggles with the cork, as Mat and Susan lean away from the bottle every time Dave points it in their direction.)

MAT

Want me to help you there?

DAVE

No, I've got it.

(POP! The cork flies offstage. Dave pours the champagne into their glasses.)

Well one night, he literally broke down her door...banging away, he broke the lock. We were in bed together, and fortunately the chain held the door. So I thought great, we can call the police now. Breaking and entering. He'd finally overstepped the boundaries.

Sure enough, the guy had never seen a cell in his life, sort of like your Tempo club friends, Mat, he was taken down to the Station, finger-printed and locked up for the night. And we laughed, drank champagne, just like this, thinking this is the one night we knew we were safe from him. Hah.

(Finishes pouring, puts the bottle on the table.)

Well I find out months later that she was sleeping with him, all during that time...no wonder, he had every right to come pounding on that door.

(Pause.)

MAT

So what does that have to do with us? What's the point here?

DAVE

I guess there is none.

MAT

You sleeping with Susan?

DAVE

Am I Susan?

SUSAN

Of course not.

DAVE

Oh...I'm leaving because the decks are stacked here. Its unfair, really, one of you hired me.

(Pause.)

MAT

Sorry?

SUSAN

Hired you? Are you joking?

MAT

I guess you're wrong, Dave. Next excuse.

DAVE

(Laughs.)
Give me a break you two, give me a little more credit. At any rate, one of you hired me, or both of you did, to find out all this, or to keep tabs on the investigation, whatever, to see if you would be caught, the point is this...
(Leans into the table, conspiratorially:)
I want you to know I will protect myself, and that if either of you comes near me, I will fucking blow your brains out, okay? Cheers.
(He takes a sip of champagne.)

MAT

Lets not over-react here, Dave. You assume one of us hired you...because one of us was the killer?

DAVE

That's right.

MAT

Why make that connection?

DAVE

You both had motives.

MAT

So one of us would watch Edgar get murdered here, right in front of us, and have planned that?

DAVE

Why not? You both knew Sammie Renton, the murderer.

SUSAN

Wait a minute-

DAVE

That's how Mat met Briller, right? Sammie moonlighted as a personal trainer, and when you were scrounging around for contacts, well there he was. Oh didn't you tell Susan? I thought you told each other everything in bed. And you Susan, well we know about that, right, must have met him on your many visits to Briller's apartment?

MAT

That would make someone at this table very dangerous.

SUSAN

Ruthless.

DAVE

Exactly.

SUSAN

Including you, Dave.

(Dave looks towards her.)

You knew Briller too, didn't you? Mat recently found out through our "research" that you were hired by his ex-wife a few years ago to investigate his activities with other women, and I guess Briller didn't appreciate it. Your business has never been the same since, has it?

(Pause)

DAVE

You know, this profession is getting too crowded. Maybe I should quit.

SUSAN

Is your "client" still paying you?

DAVE

Actually he or she stopped paying me a long time ago.

MAT

So why did you keep investigating?

DAVE

(Looking at Susan.)

I was curious. All of this was sort of helping my soul. But not anymore...

(Pulls out his wallet, takes out some cash, and throws it on the table.)

Here's the money back. I officially refuse the case.

MAT

What? No, no, Dave, you keep it.

SUSAN

Yes, Dave, we don't want that.

MAT

Someone should get paid for this mess.

DAVE

May I suggest that you take my advice, I accept I'm potentially

dangerous, at least I have been in the past, if that comforts you, add me to the list. But I suggest that none of us sees eachother ever again.

SUSAN

That's very convenient for you, Dave, isn't it, since you're the odd man out.

DAVE

Yes, is it true Mat's back on the project with you?

SUSAN

That's right, he is.

DAVE

So symmetrical, isn't it? First Edgar, now Mat. Well, in the end I always wanted to be a matchmaker. Much more gratifying.

(He finishes his champagne, then gets up from the table.)

Have a nice dinner on me, then. Or on you, however you want to look at the money on the table.

MAT

You're not staying?

DAVE

One thing about that story, when I did leave, the other two, Tracey and her "ex" stopped sleeping together. Because it got so boring without me around. Good night.

(Dave walks through the swinging door. Silence.)

MAT

That little shit.

(Susan shakes her head. LIGHTS DOWN as they both stare at the money on the table.)

SCENE ELEVEN   SUSAN'S APARTMENT

LIGHTS UP. Susan is pacing, on her cordless phone, holding a 38 revolver. Low lighting from the stand-up lamp. The Empire State

building shines white through the window.

SUSAN

How did you get in, that's all, climb through a window, you're a goddamn pervert...oh explain, explain, I will not let you near me...what are you setting me up...want to hear my reaction...I'm pissed, got it...you call this quitting the case?...of course I called him...at least he doesn't come sneaking into my apartment, what did you go through my underwear too, you goddamn loser,
I'm gonna take this gun and throw it out the window, how's that...that's my...that's my other-
(Presses the button on the receiver.)
What? Look...yes, that's right...I'm holding it right now, no Mat, don't. I don't want you to come over, I mean it, I have him on the other line...Mat!
(Presses the receiver.)
So...yes that was him...he's coming over, yes he knows...no way...do you think I would ever open the door to you again...
Dave...you stay out of this...keeping us all apart...what the hell...I'll use this gun...you stay away...Dave!

(Slams the phone down onto the couch, upset, and goes over to the window, looks out. She turns the lamp off, her face reflected,white, from the streetlamps, then LIGHTS OUT.)

SCENE TWELVE   SUSAN'S APARTMENT

IN DARKNESS, LOUD BUZZ. Susan walks over and turns on the light switch. She presses the intercom.

SUSAN

Yes.

DAVE'S VOICE THROUGH INTERCOM:

It's Dave, look.

SUSAN

I'm not letting you up here, Dave, you sick- how did you get in here?

DAVE THROUGH INTERCOM:

I have a key, I'll return it to you.

SUSAN

Key, oh my god, how did you get a key?

DAVE THROUGH INTERCOM:

Mat had one, and I copied his, while he was doing his laps at the athletic club. I had to search your apartment.
(Pause.)
Look, at least I'm being honest.

SUSAN

A little late isn't it? Did you find anything of interest in my apartment?

DAVE THROUGH INTERCOM:

Not exactly. Some old photos...are those your parents on the canoe trip?

SUSAN

Give me a break, Dave.

DAVE THROUGH INTERCOM

I know...listen, I wanted you to have that gun, for lots of reasons. I have to explain. I'm coming up, to take the gun back.

SUSAN

What? No..no you're not. Dave...
(Presses)
Dave!

(She looks around the room, grabs the wicker chair, pulls it over in front of the door. She tries to hook the rim under the door knob to jam the door.)

SUSAN

Shit...how do they do-

(BUZZ from intercom. She drops the chair on the floor, goes over to the intercom, and presses it.)

SUSAN

Did you hear me, stay away!

MAT THROUGH INTERCOM:

Susan, it's me...

SUSAN

Mat...he's in the building, and he's got a key.

MAT THROUGH INTERCOM:

Key, did you-

SUSAN

No, he stole it from you. While you were working out.

MAT THROUGH INTERCOM:

Oh my god...

SUSAN

Mat...Mat!...Jesus!

(She lets go of the intercom, and looks frantically around at her apartment. Now she struggles to push the couch across to the door. The back of the wicker chair gets jammed under the couch. She untangles the chair, then throws it across the stage. She starts to move the couch closer to the door. POUNDING ON DOOR from outside.)

SUSAN

No!
(She grabs the gun from the couch, and holds it with both hands, pointing it towards the door.)
You come through that door, I'll kill you. Just stay out of my life, you hear me?!

MAT(O.S.):

Susan, it's me...Mat.

SUSAN

Mat...oh Mat...no...you can't- I don't want to open the door.

MAT(O.S.):

What are you saying? Come on!

SUSAN

I will not- Lets all stay apart...you don't know...please.

MAT(O.S.)

He's left something out here for you.

SUSAN

What?

MAT(O.S.)

It's a bag.

SUSAN

Don't touch it...it's probably a bomb!

(We hear crinkling paper offstage.)

MAT(O.S.)

No...it's a vanilla custard pastry...and your key.

SUSAN

You didn't see him coming up?

MAT(O.S)

No...please let me in, he's probably right around the corner.

(Pause.)

SUSAN

Alright then...

(Susan goes around the couch to the door, still holding the gun. She unchains it, unlocks it, and pushes the couch back a bit. She steps back away from the door, as it opens, still pointing the gun towards the door. Mat appears in the doorway, holding a small paper bag.)

MAT

Susan, what are you doing? Are you going to shoot me?

SUSAN

No...Mat, I'm just so...close the door.

(He closes the door behind him.)

SUSAN

Lock it, and chain it.

(He locks and chains the door, and turns to face her.)

MAT

Susan, please...do you mind, it's bad enough...

(After a moment she brings the gun to her side, then drops it onto the couch. She starts to silently cry.)

MAT

My god...
(He steps around the couch and goes to her.)
What has happened?

SUSAN

He comes in here...how many times I don't know...like I have nothing, no way to-

MAT

Bastard, let's call the police.

SUSAN

Oh what's the point...

MAT

The point is this guy is harrassing you, me, the world.
(He moves towards the phone, but Susan stops him.)

SUSAN

Please don't.

MAT

Why not?

SUSAN

He knows the police. It won't matter.

MAT

Nobody knows the police.

SUSAN

He seems to.
(She takes the bag from him, looks inside.)

MAT

What, it's just a goddamn pastry.

SUSAN

There's a card.

MAT

Who gives a fuck.

(He moves away from her, as Susan pulls out the card.)

SUSAN

(Reading:)
"Sorry for all the troubles. What I meant to say in the subway..."hah.

MAT

What?

SUSAN

It's nothing...

MAT

Let me see that.
(He grabs it out of her hands. Reads it.)
"What I meant to say in the subway is your eyes will forever shine, even in the darkness."
(Pause.)
What the hell is that?

SUSAN

I don't know...

MAT

What, I mean, Dave the poet? What's going on here?

SUSAN

Who cares.

MAT

I know you saw him, outside of all of this. How often did you meet?

SUSAN

Mat, please.

MAT

He said things to me, that I only told you. I mean-

SUSAN

Mat, would you settle down?

(Mat lets the card fall to the floor. He looks down to the couch, then picks up the gun, gingerly.)

MAT

So this is it, huh? Wow.
(Examining it.)

SUSAN

I found it under my sheets, in my bed.

(Mat turns, and faces her, pointing the gun at her.)

SUSAN

Mat, please.

MAT

What?

SUSAN

Don't-

MAT

Are you the killer, Susan?

SUSAN

Mat-

MAT

Are you?

SUSAN

I don't know.

MAT

Excuse me?

SUSAN

Who knows...maybe something I did...it's possible...

MAT

Susan, what are you saying?

SUSAN

Put the goddam gun down, would you?
(Mat stares at the gun, and then slowly drops it back onto the couch.)

MAT

It's okay...Susan, I don't care.
(He moves towards her.)
You understand that? It doesn't matter. I agree with your plans.

SUSAN

Really...

(She moves away from him, pulling the pastry out from the bag, surveying it.)

MAT

Watch it. It might be poisoned.

SUSAN

That's not his style.

MAT

How do you know what his style is?

SUSAN

(Coldly:)
I don't.

MAT

I know, I'm sorry...it's just, I want to leave. Get out, just the two of us. We'll just bum around for a few weeks...move from city to city...work in bed and breakfast places-

SUSAN

That's not possible anymore.
(She puts the pastry down on the coffee table.)

MAT

What? What do you mean? The properties can wait, can't they? We can keep tabs on them.

SUSAN

Just a dream, Mat. You don't know me...you don't know half the things I've done, and what I might do...

MAT

Bullshit I know you! I know what we both were before we met. We have alot to escape from, both of us. That's all gone now. But you and I-

SUSAN

It won't work.

MAT

(Grabbing hold of her.)
That's not true.

SUSAN

Yes it is. I don't trust myself. I'd get sick of my own company.

MAT

You don't understand, Susan, how important-

SUSAN

Mat! I hate to travel, okay?

MAT

No...this is what keeps me going! I won't let you. I'm telling you, I love you.We have to get out of here. Now!

SUSAN

Let go of me...
(She is pulling his hands off of her.)

MAT

We have this film on us, this bile, we just- alright we go back then, back to the Midwest, to our roots, right, we stay at my father's place, the farm outside Dayton, we go there...
(Susan freezes.)
What's wrong, we go there, and start-
(Susan moves quickly away from him.)
What is it?

SUSAN

Dayton?

MAT

What, I said Dayton? I mean Toledo. Dayton, Toledo, we moved, what's it matter-

SUSAN

Stay away from me.

MAT

Susan!

SUSAN

Stay away!

(POUNDING on door outside.)

(Mat reels around towards the door.)

MAT

Get the fuck out of here, Dave! Get out of our lives!

SUSAN

You hired him.

MAT

Who cares about that asshole. If it weren't for him-

SUSAN

You hired Dave, didn't you...all this time, didn't you? Tell me you did!

MAT

(Moves in front of the couch.)
Susan please.

SUSAN

Tell me you did!

MAT

Yes, I hired him! So what, it doesn't matter, we've all done things-

SUSAN

Get out of here, now!

MAT

Wait a minute, what are you thinking? I hired him through Sammie, before I met you, when I was suspicious of you and Edgar. Sammie never told me who he was, what he looked like. I didn't know he'd act like a goddamn banker. Not until the airport lounge did I figure out who he was. And then I tried to pay him off but he just wouldn't stop.

SUSAN

(Backs away from Mat.)
All this time…

MAT

Sammie just wanted to scare Briller. Make you think twice about leaving us out of the deal. The gun was Sammie's idea. But he never said anything about metal shards! I promise! You've got to believe me, Susan!
(POUND, POUND, POUND on door. Rattling of the lock. Mat turns back towards door.)
Shut the fuck up! Stay out of this.
(Turns to her)

(Susan continues to back away from him.)

MAT

Susan, that's all I did. You can't-he's wrong. Dave doesn't know anything. If you had just never tried to get me off the deal.

(Susan runs towards the door, but Mat grabs her.)

SUSAN

Ah...Mat!

MAT

You brought me back, Susan, from the brink, do you know that? I refuse for you to judge me on this one...this one foolish-I won't let you paint me like this!

SUSAN

Dave!

MAT

Oh, the hero "poet" now, is that it? Christ, what is this?
(Gripping her tightly.)

SUSAN

Get off of me!
(Struggling with him.)

MAT

Get off of you, now...huh, what happened to melding into me, dammit, what happened-
(She slaps him hard. He lets go, as she breaks away.)

(POUND and then POUND, as someone is trying to break down the door. Susan runs over to the couch, and picks up the gun. She points it at Mat.)

MAT

Right, Susan...Maybe we should both go to hell then. Start fresh. They might need a new shopping complex. Dave will join us later, I'm sure. You'd like that wouldn't you?

(He starts to walk towards her.)

SUSAN

Stay away, Mat.

MAT

You could then screw us all out of that deal. I bet it would impress the big guy down there. Of course Briller beat us to the area, he may have staked out the best properties.
(Moving in towards her.)

SUSAN

Get out of here!

MAT

What getting too close for you Susan? Am I turning too real, that's not what you like about me, is it. Shoving in your face who you really are. Well I got news for you, that gun is a fake, like the rest of us. You think I'd let Sammie come barging into that room with a real gun? So give me the goddamn gun.

SUSAN

Don't...

MAT

Maybe you just don't have it, to take the leap. Maybe you just can't be loved, by anyone, Susan.
(He suddenly grabs the barrel of the gun. Susan SHOOTS. Mat stares at her, confused, then crumples to the floor. POUND on the door, then CRACK as the door BREAKS open,

held by the chain. Dave stares through the doorway.)

(Susan drops the gun. and runs to Mat's body, as the LIGHTS COME DOWN.)

SCENE THIRTEEN   UPPER WESTSIDE RESTAURANT

LIGHTS UP on an Upscale Westside Restaurant. The florentine orange sponge painted walls have been decorated with faux turkey feathers, multicolored corn cobs dangle from beaded wires attached to the ceiling. Dave and Susan sit at a small table, across from each other. Susan's mouth looks different, more taut.

DAVE

Excellent stuffing...last year, I'm telling you. I'd never be caught dead here at Christmas, but Thanksgiving, hey, you're supposed to be with strangers, I mean, not that you are, but we're all supposed to be one big family, according to the pilgrims, right?
(Pause.)
So you didn't want to be with your family in Kansas City?

SUSAN

No...

DAVE

I can understand, I'm that way too...
(Picking up the menu, surveying it.)
Now let me see here....the Harvest Feast for two, that should be good, I remember their cranberries are-

SUSAN

He was right about Dayton.

DAVE

Sorry?

SUSAN

His father did have a place outside Dayton. I checked into it.

DAVE
Poor...sucker, didn't even know when he was lying.

SUSAN
He wasn't lying.

DAVE
Oh?

SUSAN
It was different. More clarifying.

DAVE
I see...
(Looking back down at the menu.)

SUSAN
I really could have loved him.

DAVE
Of course.

SUSAN
I mean it.

DAVE
I just don't think you're capable of-

SUSAN
Yes, I am.

(Pause.)

DAVE
Shall we look at the menu?

SUSAN
Why did you give me that gun?

DAVE
For protection, of course. How was I to know.

SUSAN

Right...

DAVE

Hey, mark my words, you would have woken up three months from now in your little pensione in Italy with a pillow being placed over your head. That's where you two were headed.

SUSAN

Beat having dinner with you on West 79th street.

DAVE

Noone's forcing you here...

SUSAN

I know...
(Pause.)
I'm a killer.

DAVE

Oh, what do you mean. We should be celebrating here.

SUSAN

Right, with my star eye-witness.

DAVE

Look, you think I'm going to let a great banker like you go down just because of some guy harrassing you...we need people like you. This is a great real estate deal for Hell's Kitchen. So how are we doing? Did you call that bank in Jersey?

SUSAN

Please, Dave-

DAVE

Alright, later then.

SUSAN

I should be in prison.

DAVE

Oh yeah?

SUSAN

A little cot, all my own. My own private cell.
(Pause.)
I killed...everyone.

DAVE

Well, I must admit, if you clean-cut midwesterners would stop coming into New York and blowing each other way, New York would be a safer place.
(Laughs.)

(Susan starts to cry. She brings her napkin up to her mouth.)

DAVE

Hey, it's alright...I'm sorry.

SUSAN

(Through the napkin.)
It hurts...so much.

DAVE

Take that away, nothing to be ashamed of here. You're crying, that's a start, now isn't it? That's something. You look beautiful, really.

SUSAN

Don't say that.

DAVE

There we are.
(Gently taking the napkin from her mouth.)

(Susan, composing herself, puts the napkin back in her lap. Pause.)

SUSAN

What...do scarred people-

DAVE

You're not-

SUSAN

Shut up! What do people like us do now...huh, what do we do?

(Pause. Dave looks around the restaurant.)

DAVE

We order....that's what. We order our turkey...

(He motions stage left. The waiter enters as the Lights Fade Down.)

END OF PLAY

Degas in Rome

An Imaginary Diary

Charles Hobson

club paper
October 9, 2012

Paper for the club, October 9, 2012
Charles Hobson

Dégas in Rome

In 1857, a twenty-three year old aspiring artist named Edgar Dégas traveled to Italy to immerse himself in the culture and artistic traditions of Rome. (Think of the twenty-three olds you might know.) At such an age Dégas was years away from being the towering figure of Impressionist art. At twenty-three he was still a youth and his artistic vision was not yet fully formed. But he had several advantages.

As part of a successful banking family he was financially well-off and an independent traveler. His father was encouraging and supportive of his art, and he was fluent in Italian with a loving extended family in Naples and Florence. Edgar Dégas's grandfather escaped Paris during the French Revolution (after he watched his fiancée being guillotined) and established a bank in Naples in the early 1800's. Years later he sent his oldest son to Paris to open a French branch of the bank. That son became Edgar Dégas's father.

Dégas's early artistic studies in Paris earned him sufficient credentials to be admitted to the French Academy in Rome as an unenrolled student in its quarters at the Villa Medici. There he drew from the model, studied engravings in the Academy Library and formed close friendships with several of the artists in residence. He became part of a group of artists that called themselves the Cald'arrosti (after the cries of Roman street vendors hawking roast chestnuts.) The Cald'arrosti debated the styles of Ingres and Delacroix and frequented the Caffé Greco on Via Condotti.

Dégas drew incessantly, sketching in the Sistine Chapel, the Villa Farnesina, the Borghese and Doria Pamphilj Galleries and the Capitoline Museums. He walked and drew in the Borghese Gardens, in the Forum and at the Castel Sant'Angelo. He made studies of works by the Renaissance masters and was beginning to see beyond the ideal form to the emotional complexity that lies beneath the surface.

What follows here is an fictional series of entries in his sketchbook that I have written which cover a particular week in November of 1857. The entries seek to capture the ripening of his artistic vision as it was nurtured by his affair with Rome.

In these entries Rome takes the form of a beautiful woman who escorts Dégas to the City's masterpieces. With each masterpiece she transforms herself and assumes the persona of the subject in the painting. You must suspend your critcal faculties and accept the three-fold embodiments this beautiful woman holds. She is all at once the spirit of the City, the figure in each of these masterpieces and a real, flesh and blood young woman.

I have elected to add “some notes" at the end of each daily entry that enlarges upon the entries that I have written as Dégas. These additional notes are much like those a biographer working years later might add to illuminate some of the references in the entry and are not fictional.

From Dégas’s journal.

Friday, November 6, 1857

Rome arrived at the Caffé Greco on a rainy fall evening – the first rain of the season. The four of us were deep in conversation. Her arrival distracted us from our unreconciled notions of tradition and revolution, of Ingres and Delacroix.

That night she shook out her curls from under the hood of her rain cloak and turned, assessing the clientele. Her eyes ran around the cafe and lit for a flicker on mine. She continued to scan the room. Later I would tell her I'd seen her at her most vulnerable and beautiful in that instant. We were about to meet and I did not yet know the place she would take in my life and my art. I did not yet know the depths of her terrible beauty, its exquisite elegance and her deep cruelty. That night she appeared to me to be both courtesan and virginal innocent. That night Rome took a table opposite us and ordered her coffee.

I stood and walked to her table. "Let me draw you." I said and she turned her head toward me and looked at me with amusement – but with some interest. A moment passed. "Perhaps, she said but . . . " she paused and looked intently at me. "Let me show you around a little first."

• • • • •

"Perhaps you know of the Villa Farnesina," said Rome, and we walked out into the rain and found a coach to take us there.

"A voluptuary's palace," she said as we arrived. "A man of excess built this place in 1510. He told his dinner guests to throw gold and silver tableware over the bank into the Tiber after dining. He didn't tell the guests he had a net in the river. But I digress.

I am here as the sea nymph Galatea, a vision painted by Raphael. My lover, a poor shepherd, was cruelly murdered by the Cyclops, a beast assigned to me by the gods, but I turned my dead lover's blood into the river Acis, near Mt. Etna in Sicily. After that I left the world of mortals. This is a picture of me leaving. Can you see the loss of love on my face even as I fly to the gods?"

Some notes.

The Villa Farnesina was built in the early 1500's by Agostino Chigi, perhaps the richest man in Renaissance Europe. Popes and kings depended on his loans and his bank had branches in places as far away as London and Cairo. Chiga's elaborate parties were legendary and he was famous for the affairs he had with the beautiful courtesans of the day.

He hired Raphael to decorate the Villa. Raphael's subject was Galatea, the beautiful sea nymph who fell in love with the shepherd Acis. Her consort, the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, became jealous of the two lovers and threw an enormous pillar of stone at Acis and killed him. According to the myth, Galatea poured the blood of her lover into the ground and created the river Acis in Sicily.

Rather than painting the main events of the myth, Raphael chose the scene of the nymph's apotheosis taken from the poem by Angelo Poliziano as she departs the mortal realm.

There is some hint that the image of Galatea was modeled after Chiga's mistress, Imperia. Giorgio Vasari, however, proposes that Galatea was Raphael's vision of female perfection, an idealized composite of his many lovers.

At the time that Raphael was painting at the Villa Farnesina he was having a celebrated and passionate affair with Fornarina, a baker's daughter who lived nearby. Chigi noticed that the affair was interrupting his artist's work and had the girl kidnapped hoping it would to help Raphael concentrate. But Raphael was so depressed his production fell even more. Chigi gave up and had Fornarina move in with Raphael and his work flourished.

From Dégas's journal.

Saturday, November 7, 1857

The next day I called upon Rome and found her distracted. She'd just done something cruel, she said, and she wanted to let me know about it so I'd know what I was getting into. She asked if I knew the story of Salome. She didn't wait for an answer. She picked up a Bible and read:

"But on Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them: and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask of him. But she being instructed before by her mother, said: Give me here in a dish the head of John the Baptist. And the king was struck sad: yet because of his oath, and for them that sat with him at table, he commanded it to be given. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a dish: and it was given to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother. (Matthew 14:6-11)

Rome closed the Bible and looked directly at me. "Let's go," she commanded, and she led me to the Piazza del Collegio Romano where she swept into the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj as if she were its owner.

We found the painting – Titian's painting of Mary Magadalene. "It's reputed that the head on the tray is Titian's self-portrait – a comment on the artist's own relationship with women perhaps? What a strong face he has."

She continued to study the painting with a bemused look on her face as she took herself into it. "Some blame it all on my mother, cajoling me into asking for the macabre trophy. But I was careless, capricious and caught up with my own beauty and power. Can't you see that?"

"You see," said Rome, "how my face is tilted a little, both looking away and yet drawn to the head on the platter? I'm actually somewhat proud but also bemused and wondering at what I've done. So when you draw me, draw me like that and see if you can catch what is in the eyes. See if you can get it."

Some notes.

Salome became the stepdaughter of Herod when he married her mother, Herodias. At a dinner to celebrate Herod's birthday Salome performed an erotic dance that prompted the careless offer from the aroused Herod. Salome's mother bore a grudge against John the Baptist who had contended that Herod's marriage to her was unlawful. She took advantage of the situation and told her daughter to ask for his head. Salome has been described as a dangerous female seductress or as a frivolous young woman given to cold foolishness. The historian Flavius Josephus records that she lived on to marry twice and raise several children.

The Biblical story of Salome has long been a favorite of painters. Titian's painting contrasts the innocent young beauty of Salome with the brutally severed head. The maid's upturned face seems to be quietly perplexed at her mistress's act.

Titian painted his Salome around 1515. He used a model whose face appears in four other paintings of the time and some consider her to have been his mistress. There is also speculation that Titian painted his self-portrait as the face of John the Baptist.

The Palazzo Doria Pamphilj holds what many consider to be the largest collection of privately held art in Rome. The principal entrance is now on the Via del Corso but in Degas's time the entrance to the Gallery was from the Piazza del Collegio Romano. The collection was assembled beginning in the 16th century with the bequest by Pope Innocent X. His portrait by Velasquez is considered the collection's masterpiece, though contemporaries whisper that it depicts his despotic lifestyle and vindictive character.

From Dégas's journal.

Sunday, November 8, 1857

Rome refused to see me the next morning. It was just as well. I was still sorting out my feelings about her as Salome. But late in the day I received an invitation to meet her at the Borghese Gallery. Late afternoon sunlight streamed through the high windows of the second floor galleries. We could see strollers in the gardens that stretched away to the east toward the Villa Medici.

As we walked through the galleries she fluffed her gown to flare out its skirts in a beguiling way. She was leading me to a painting hung in a prominent space between two windows and Rome seemed to be warmed by the idea of showing me Correggio's painting of Danaë.

"Now Danaë," she mused, "what a life. My father shut me away so I would remain a virgin, but Zeus had other ideas. When he appeared as a cloud and rained down his seed I was completely open. My little friend Cupid tried to add a bit of decorum and held a veil but it doesn't hide my pleasure. If you look carefully you'll see the golden seed actually could be golden coins.

I've been tempted on occasion to take advantage of coins for lust, and have done so on occasion, but my sensual interests far exceed any interest in a monetary exchange. I do so relish sensual pleasure. Can you see that in the moist smile and the weight of pleasure on the eyelids? Do I scandalize you? Can you make something of that?"

Some notes.

Danaë was the daughter of King Acrisius of Argos. The King learned from the Oracle that he would be killed by his daughter's son. In order to keep her childless, the king shut her up in her bronze tower. However, Zeus became enamored with Danaë and found a way to come to her through the roof in the form of a golden rain that impregnated her. She gave birth to her son, Perseus, and a complex myth grows from these events that ends with the Oracle's prophecy coming true.

Degas's arrangement at the Villa Medici was informal and did not require him to produce a large painted copy of a work from one of the museums. The selections of work to copy were controlled by the Director of the French Academy, Jean-Victor Schmitz, who had conservative tastes and rejected student interest in copying Danaë. Degas's friend, Gustave Moreau, who was also at the Villa Medici informally, had no such constraints and duly copied the Correggio, perhaps with Degas's amusement and emulation.

Correggio is regarded as the foremost painter of the Parma School of the Italian Renaissance. He is considered an enigmatic and eclectic artist whose work was regarded as revolutionary and influential by subsequent artists. Danaë was commissioned around 1531 by the Duke of Mantua as part of a series of paintings depicting the *Loves of Jupiter* as described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The voluptuous series was intended to decorate a private "Ovid Room" in the Duke's palazzo.

From Dégas's journal.

Wednesday, November 11, 1857

We didn't see each other for two days, even though I called at her residence several times. On Wednesday a messenger delivered a note instructing me to meet Rome again at the Doria Pamphilj Gallery at 6 o'clock that evening. The Gallery was closed to the public but the man guarding the entrance seemed to expect me and beckoned me in. I was directed to a gallery where I found Rome absorbed by Caravaggio's painting of Mary Magdalene.

Rome turned to me. "Perhaps you think I'm not devout but how could that be here in the city of the Popes?" Her voice held a certain irony.

Turning to the painting she said, "You know, of course, that I love the physical world but I am also consumed by the path of Catholic Christianity. I was a courtesan who became a devotee of Jesus, whose crucifixion and resurrection I witnessed. But I am still an ordinary person and Caravaggio painted me as a real woman with a scandalous past who received Christ's blessing. Caravaggio even used a prostitute as a model – and look how opulently dressed I am with pearls and a carafe of oil at my feet. The Popes made me a saint but they did not always think well of me. As Magdalene I had a complex relationship with Jesus but one that was strong and close. Caravaggio finally got it right, I wasn't contrite about a dissolute life – I was in sorrow for his death. I hope you can see the spirituality he put into my face and clasped hands. And look how he used color to capture my passion."

Some notes.

Caravaggio's painting represented a great departure for his day in the way Magdalene was painted. Its realism would have been shocking to a contemporary audience. One 17th century biographer contended that the religious nature of the painting was feigned by making the addition of a carafe of oil and discarded pearls. Others dispute this. The carafe of oil would have been associated with the belief that Magdalene washed Christ's feet with the oil using her sensuous long red hair. The broken pearls may represent the abandonment of her previous dissolute lifestyle.

Caravaggio is known to have used prostitutes as his models and historians have speculated that his mistress Anna Bianchini is the model for Mary Magdalene. Peter Robb, a 21st-century biographer, suggests that there were subtle hints of violence in the painting. He perceived her face and hands as swollen and together with the broken pearls lead him to suggest Caravaggio was commenting on the mistreatment of courtesans by the police in Rome. Robb cites records of Bianchini's life that suggest she had been whipped according to the custom of the day and the ointment in the jar was for her treatment.

In the Gnostic writings of the 2nd and 3rd Centuries (as compared to the official Catholic Canon) Mary Magdalene is seen as one of the most important of Jesus' disciples who had a deeper understanding of his teachings and whom Jesus regarded more highly than the other disciples. It wasn't until Pope Gregory the Great's homily of 591 that Mary Magdalene was suggested to have been a prostitute. Because of this suggestion Mary became the patroness of "wayward women."

From Dégas's journal.

Friday, November 13, 1857

Today she arrived at my studio door by coach and invited me to join her. The driver took a roundabout way that eventually led to the Capitoline Museum. She was wearing a voluminous, hooded cloak that shrouded her from head to foot.

“We are going to the tallest of my seven hills,” she said. “At the very dawn of time the Romans and Sabines fought here. Romulus started it all. He invited the Sabines to a festival and then abducted their women. The Sabines retaliated by bribing Tarpeia, the daughter of the commander of the Romans, to let the Sabines in the back door of the Citadel. She was enamored with the gold bracelets the Sabine women wore on their upper arms. She met a harsh fate. Legend has it that she was thrown from the crest of a steep cliff overlooking the Roman Forum to the dagger-sharp rocks below.”

We walked across the Piazza del Campidoglio. “Of course,” she continued, "what we see now is the vision Michelangelo concocted for this piazza and its museums nearly 500 years ago. It only took three centuries to build.”

We entered the Palazo Nuovo and strode through the museum’s corridors until we reached the small octagonal room which held the Capitoline Venus. The gallery was quiet and I was able to walk around her smooth, cold curves.

“I want to remind you how I began,” Rome said. “Here I am, a sculpture from the 4th century BC copied from the master Praxiteles. I’m leaving my bath and I’ve suddenly become aware that I am being watched. See how modest I am?

I was found buried in a garden in the 17th century and a pope gave me to this museum where I have my own niche. I span centuries and my beauty has been my protection and my gift. But behind it I am as hard as stone.”

“When we met,” she said, “I wanted to show you around. We have one last stop.”

We found the coach waiting and returned to my studio, reaching it just after dark. She climbed the stairs holding the long cloak at the knees to avoid catching it under her feet. In the studio we stood contemplating each other.

"When we met," she said, "I sensed your strong art spirit. But you are young. You have loved the gestures of art but I wanted you to see through me to the root of art and life and how unruly, violent and beautiful it is. I have shown you myself and I see you are beginning to grasp the nature of my beauty and all that lies in life."

"Draw me," she commanded and with that she dropped her cloak and stood naked in the studio.

The next morning I woke and found several drawings I had made the night before. Rome had left sometime during the night. She never came to me again in person, but I often found her shadow and heard her voice. "What do you see?" she whispered. "What do you really see?"

A scrap from a much later journal.

I think of Rome as a beautiful woman. She has a beauty of great complexity -- haughty, capricious, sensual, mysterious, discrete and dangerous. She wanted me to see her longings and her secrets. She wanted to be inside me – to inhabit me. She made me love her, then sent me away, but I still sense her presence in all I do.

In Rome , Degas found his muse.

A final note.

Edgar Degas, in his old age speaking of his time in Rome, 1856-58
"It was the most extraordinary period of my life."

Some notes.

The Capitoline Venus is a Roman copy based on the Aphrodite of Cnidos by Praxiteles. In the late 1600s it was found buried in the gardens belonging to the

Stasi family near San Vitali. Pope Benedict XIV purchased it in 1752 and gave it to the museum where it has its own room known as “the cabinet of Venus”. Napoleon admired it and had it shipped to Paris but it was returned to Rome in 1816 after his downfall.

The Capitoline Hill was the Citadel of the earliest Romans and served as seat of government until the 16th century when Pope Paul III hired Michelangelo to design the Piazza del Campidoglio and its surrounding building. He wanted to impress Charles V of France who was expected to visit 1538. Michelangelo’s formidable and extensive design reversed the orientation of the plaza turning it away from the Roman Forum and toward Papal Rome.

Tarpeia, the daughter who betrayed her Roman father and his troops in the 8th century BC, suffered death at the rock that now bears her name. Several versions of her death exist, the most prominent being that she was flung from the rock by the Sabines to show their scorn and disgust. The rock, known thereafter as the Tarpeian Rock, became the official site of executions for traitors for the next 300 years.

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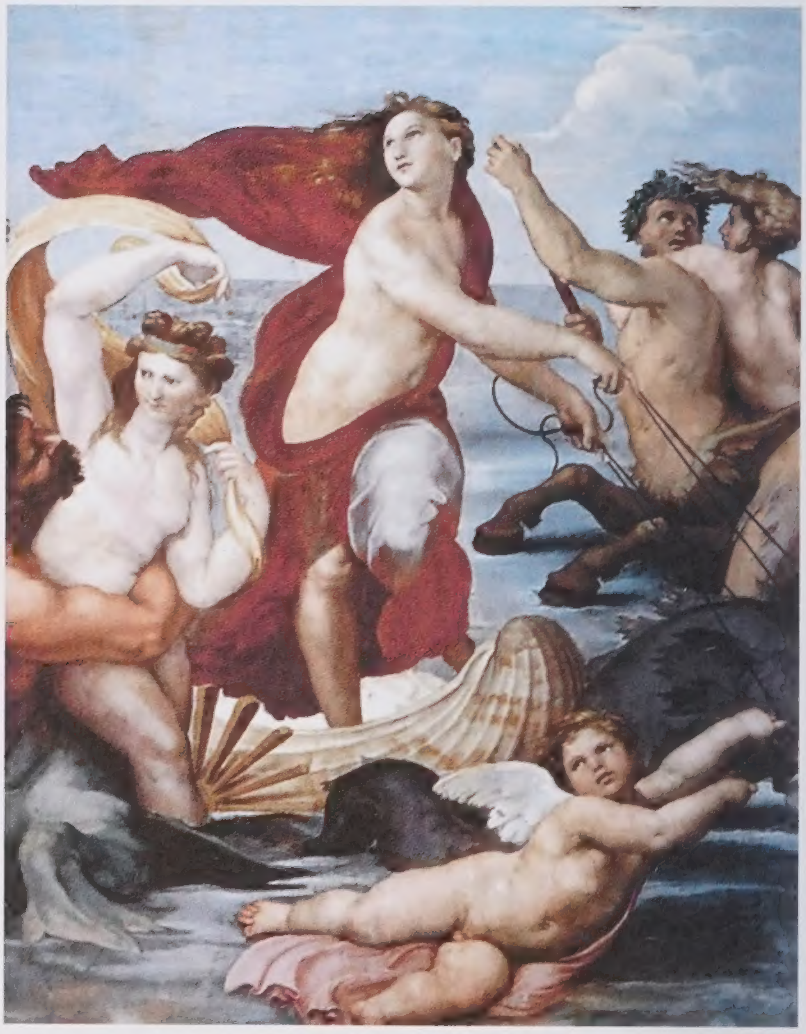
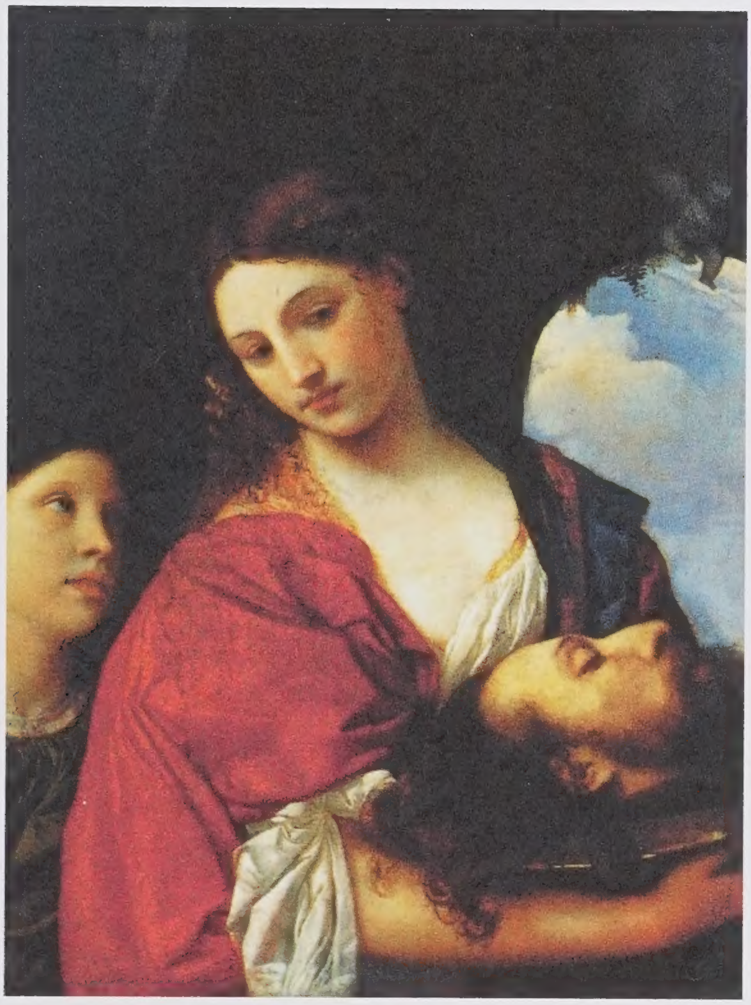
An Imaginary Diary

Images to accompany
the club paper by
Charles Hobson

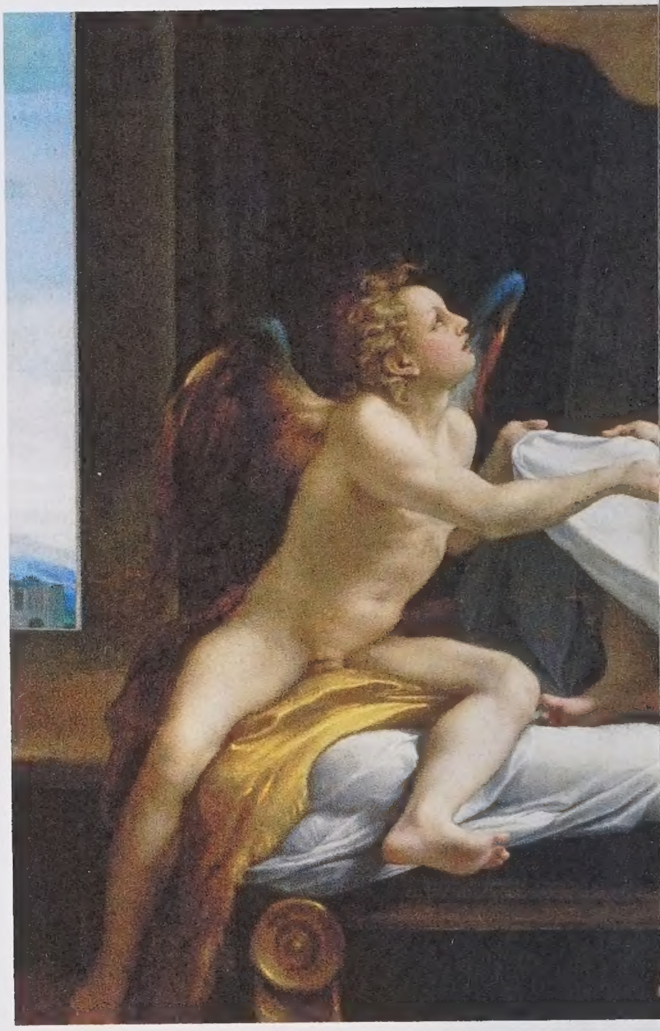
October 9, 2012



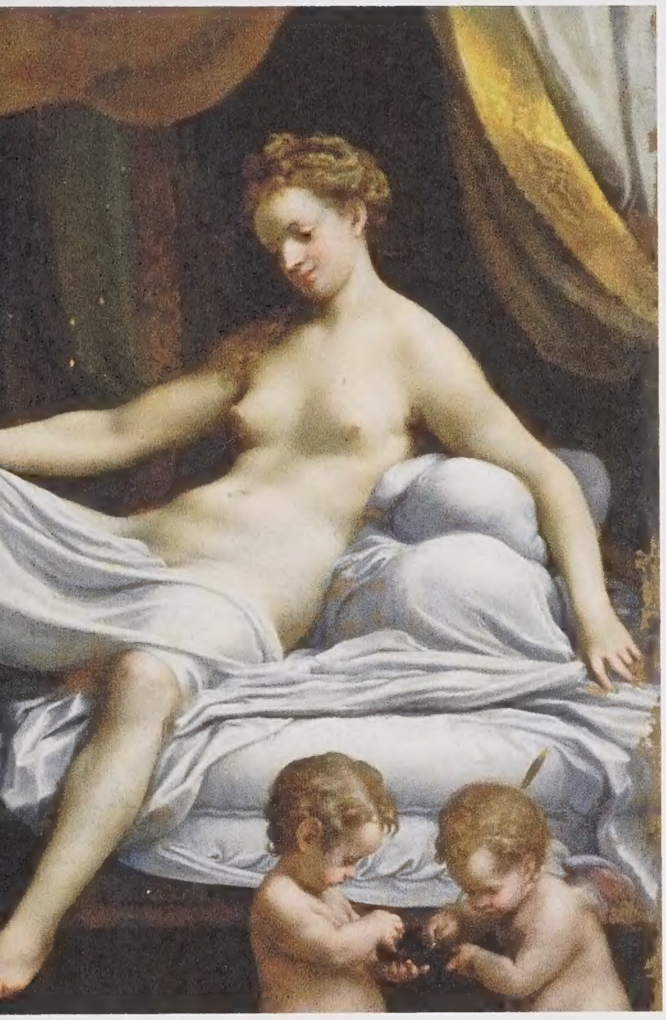
Raphael, *Galatea*, 1512, (Villa Farnesina)



Titian, *Salome,* 1515 (Doria Pamphilj Gallery)



Corregio, *Danae*, 15



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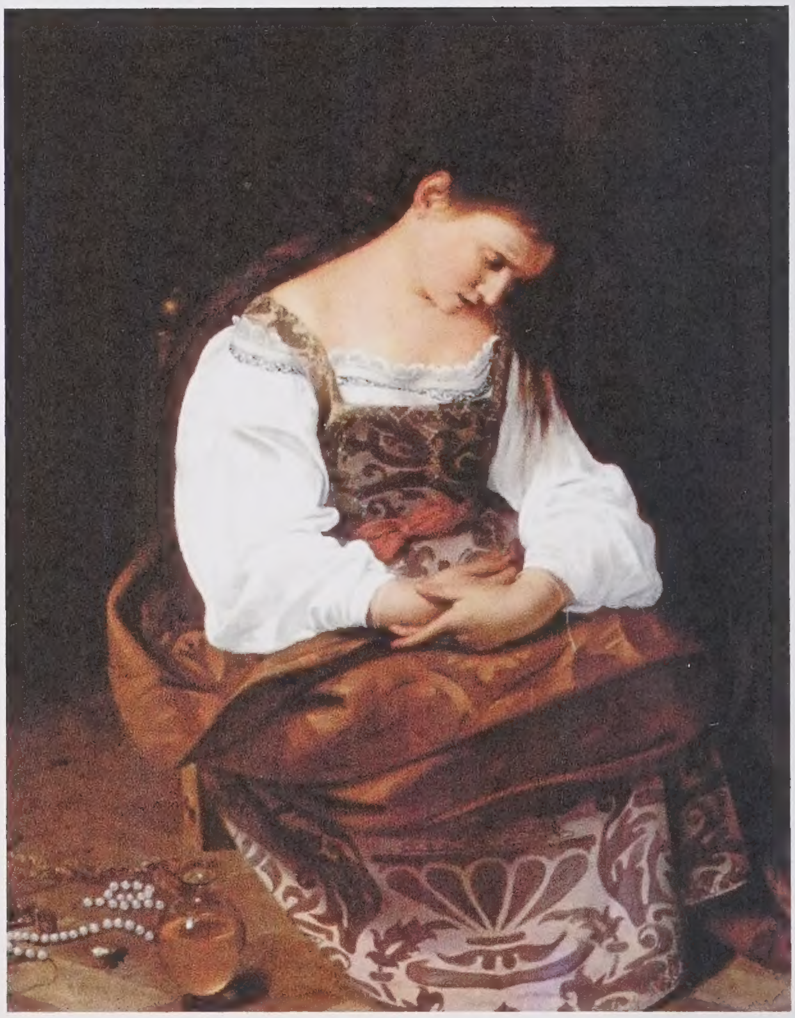
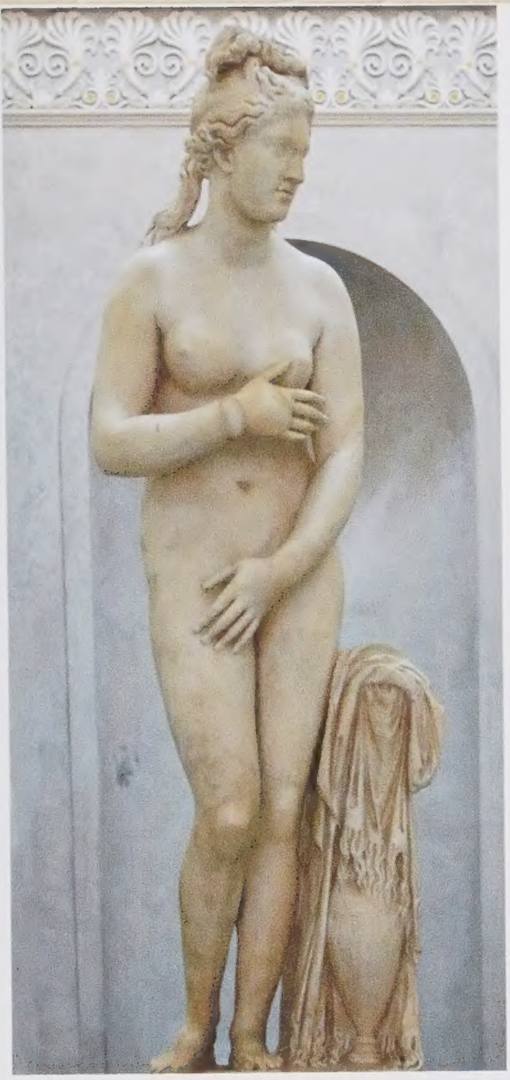
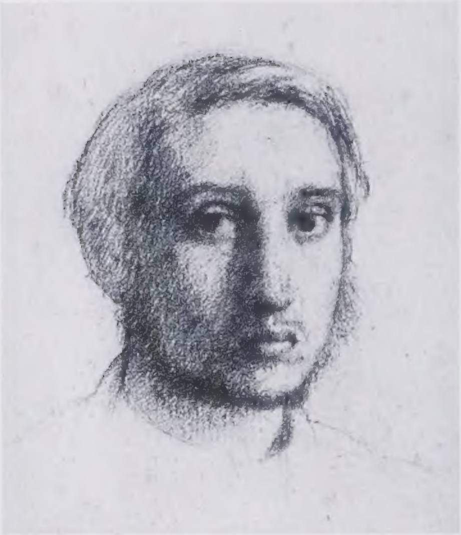


Carravagio, *Penitent Magdalene*, 1594 (Doria Pamphilj)



Capitoline Venus, after Praxiteles, 2d C. BC



Edgar Degas, *Self Portrait*, 1857

Bruce Sams
September 2012

The King James Bible

Last year, 2011, marked the 400th anniversary of the publication of the most influential book in the English language, the King James Bible. Tonight we'll review the way this remarkable book came to be, and discuss some aspects of what makes it so remarkable. My theology credentials are limited to successfully passing catechism courses, so this paper will of necessity focus on the historical and literary aspects of the King James Bible, and leave the discussion of its profound theological impact to others.

Like many of you, I was reared on the King James Bible. We Presbyterians relied heavily on the bible for spiritual and moral guidance, and it served as the basis of our Sunday school and Church instruction. Its teachings, especially its stories, formed a significant part of my culture as a child and teenager. After high school my interests became more secular- Sunday more likely to find me on the first tee than in the first pew. However, as an incidental part of my daily existence, I was often pleasantly reminded of the language, quotes and cadences of the bible.

My interest in the bible awakened again two years ago on hearing a lecture at the Arion Press by Robert Alter, Professor of Hebrew at Berkeley. He reviewed his recently published book, "Pen of Iron", which examined the effect of the KJB on several American novelists. That encouraged me to read a wonderful literary appreciation of KJB by Harold Bloom, critic and professor at Yale. I subsequently

found two other good books on the general history surrounding translation of the KJB as well as two other books by Alter, one on narrative, the other on poetry in the bible. I have listed these at the end of the paper.

This paper will cover several areas: biblical translation prior to the publication of the KJB; the religious and political forces in England leading up to the decision to commission this bible; the methods involved in producing it; an analysis of what makes the prose and poetry in the KJB so admired; and lastly, a look at the status of the KJB now, and the newer translations that are replacing it. I hope the story of the KJB will be as interesting to you as it has been to me.

The Hebrew Bible is the earliest recorded bible. Scholars now believe that the material in the first five books of Moses chronicled events beginning about 1800 BC. These events, or legends relating these events, were passed down orally until about 900 BC, when a scribal class developed around the courts of David and Solomon and recorded the oral material. Later, around 500 BC, after the release of the Jews from Babylon, other scribes revamped these writings at least once more. About 250 B.C., the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek and was widely used in this form by Jews both in and out of the Holy Land.

The New Testament, on the other hand, was originally written in every day Greek or Aramaic, the common language of Palestine. Paul wrote his first epistle about 50 AD. Mark wrote the first gospel about 70 AD. The other writings appeared over the next 150 years.

In 400 AD Saint Jerome translated both the New and Old testaments from the Greek and Hebrew into Latin. This translation, widely adopted, helped Latin

become the major language of art and literature for the western world as well as widening the divide between the Eastern (Greek speaking) Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1380 John Wycliffe produced the first translation of the bible into English. This signal work translated Jerome's Latin version into Middle English, the language of Chaucer, the common vernacular of the time. Wycliffe sought to make the bible available to a wide range of readers, not just the priests. Predictably, the Church declared him a heretic. They feared that the availability of the bible to the common citizen would incite profound unrest in England. They were right.

William Tyndale (1494- 1536) stands out as the most important figure of our translation story, as well as the most tragic. A brilliant linguist, fluent in French, Greek, Hebrew, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish, he taught theology at Oxford. Driven by the same zeal as Wycliffe, he became convinced that another translation of the bible into the English of his time would further the access of ordinary people to the scriptures. Tyndall, drawing on his linguistic skills, re-visited the original Hebrew and Greek sources, striving for complete fidelity to the originals. He translated almost all of the New Testament, the five books of Moses, and a large part of the Prophets. Fortunately, Tyndall had a remarkable ability to use felicitous and majestic language to enrich his translation. The KJB and its translators owe a tremendous debt to Tyndale, as they took about 80% of the New Testament, and much of the Old directly from Tyndale.

Tyndale paid a bittter price for his vision of bringing the bible to the laity. King Henry the 8th perceived him as a threat. He was eventually run out of England,

then captured, strangled to death and burned at the stake. His last words were "Lord, open the King Of England's eyes." Henry's eyes at that time were focused on his attempts to divorce Catherine of Aragon and he did not respond at once to this appeal. However, two years after Tyndall's atrocious martyrdom, and shortly after finally attaining his divorce, several other translations were allowed by the good King Henry.

After Henry's death, Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) faced increasing demands for a new translation, and even sponsored one, the Bishop's bible, to showcase several of her favorite theological notions. Puritans in particular agitated for different translations and interpretations. They wished to see less emphasis on the worldly church, its pomp and show, its surplices, incense, priests. Puritans felt the church (both Catholic and Anglican) too pre-occupied with the church itself and wanted a simpler, more spiritual, more parishioner-led religion. Not openly stated, but implied (or suspected by royalty) was a corollary belief that a Christian's first allegiance was to God. Kings and other worldly potentates came second.

Puritans preferred the Geneva Bible, produced, as its name suggests, in Geneva. This bible contained strong Puritan beliefs outlined in footnotes, addenda and in its choice of words. For instance it translated a Hebrew word as "elder" instead of "priest." and used the term "congregation" instead of "church". Shakespeare favored this bible, as did Milton. The Puritans brought it to America. Like all English bibles, it leaned heavily on Tyndale, and was the most readable of the several English translations available before the KJB. But Puritans wanted even more emphasis on their point of view.

In 1603, James became King of England, after spending his first 31 years as Regent and King of Scotland. Puritans had annoyed James in Scotland because of their propensity to put religion above State. So when the Puritans petitioned James for a new translation, he agreed to the concept, but had no intention of providing the translation the Puritans wanted. He saw the Puritan's request as a way of replacing the Geneva Bible with one more to his liking. He also felt a single translation, of which he approved, would be unifying for England.

James took a personal interest in the proposed translation. He also did something many of us would have thought the kiss of death; he decreed the project should be carried out by a large committee, specifically, fifty-four men. James appointed the very best scholars and clerics in England to serve. He also included a few Puritans, although these held moderate Puritan views. The committee split into six committees, which met at three separate, but prestigious, locations- Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster Abbey.

James ordered the translators to rely heavily on the good translations already available. He also wanted the translators to revisit the Hebrew Bible and the original Greek New testament, as Tyndall had done. Apparently James did get a translation that suited him. Although the final product was less "anti-Papist" than the Puritans would have liked, even they eventually accepted it.

The translators labored six years to finish the product, with multiple re-workings, cross-consultations, and consultations with scholars not on the committee. They strove for language that was both simple and majestic. Every word received careful consideration. The translators tried to reproduce a literal translation of the Hebrew

bible but actually succeeded in producing an even more metaphorical and imaginative rendering. Tyndale's prose, elegant as it was, received a refining polish from the translation committees.

Even the Preface to the KJB used simple but beautiful language. Here is an excerpt from the Preface written by Miles Smith, one of the translators. "Translation it is that openeth the window to let in the light, that breaketh the shell that we might eat the kernel; that putteth away the curtain that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well that we may come by the water." Compare that with the usual preface in today's book and we can get some insight into the difference in use of the language then and now. Perhaps it is no matter of chance that Shakespeare's Othello appeared the year the KJB was commissioned, and the Tempest the year the KJB was published. In any event, the two greatest literary treasures in the English language, the KJB and Shakespeare's works were created in this same fertile time.

So, what is it about the KJB that elevates it to our number one book? Part of its veneration is due, of course, to its subject matter- the basis of religious belief for millions. But other translations carry essentially the same theological message. For most secular readers, and for literary inclined believers, it is set apart by its literary excellence .

Harold Bloom states that the literary value of the KJB and the Hebrew Bible in its original form are of equivalent literary value. That is to say, the translation preserved the excellence of the original. This is high praise from Bloom whose book extolls the Hebrew Bible as a cardinal example of literary excellence. He praises the

Hebrew scribes, writing about 1000 BC, as sophisticated intellectuals and their writings as ironic, playful, sarcastic, containing numerous puns and word games. These writings obviously were tailored to the elite of a court. The scribes envisioned an all-powerful God, yet one who is all- to- human; jealous, demanding, and infinitely capricious. The creation, the expulsion from Eden, the extinction by flood, the humiliation of Job, the forty years in the wilderness- a gripping and memorable narrative.

Robert Alter mirrors Bloom's admiration for the Hebrew Bible. He emphasizes that ancient texts may differ in many respects from ours. This should not, however, lead us to any condescending preconception that the text is therefore crude or simple.

The bible itself reveals an awareness of, and interest in, literary excellence. The following quotation is from Ecclesiastes 12:9-10. "Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying many proverbs with great care. The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth."

Many scholars hold the original Greek New Testament to have far less literary value than the Old Testament. As mentioned previously, the gospels appeared years after the crucifixion, written in everyday Greek, not in the polished vocabulary of the Greek intelligentsia of the time. Also, most of the New Testament told its story in narrative form, not poetry. Later Christians such as Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome recognized the plainness of language and style of the Greek New Testament, defending this by saying that the Holy Spirit had deliberately

distained aesthetic quality to emphasize truth. Furthermore, many Jewish scholars consider the New Testament viciously anti-Semitic, and perhaps this influences their view of its literary merit. Robert Alter, in his book on poetry in the Bible does not even mention the New Testament.

However, as we all know from our own reading, the New Testament in the KJB does contain numerous brilliant passages. We should once more give credit to Tyndale, whose translation of the New Testament Harold Bloom equates with the work of Shakespeare, Chaucer and Milton, and whose work, as mentioned previously, forms the majority of the KJB New Testament.

As an example of New Testament writing I will read some verses from Revelations, and then a familiar poem of William Blake's based on these verses.

Revelations 21: 1-5. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

And now William Blake's' familiar poem, Jerusalem

"And did those feet in ancient time

Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pasture seen?
And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?
Bring me my bow of burning gold;
Bring me my Arrows of desire.
Bring me my spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire.
I shall not cease from Mental Fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green and pleasant land."

To what elements of style does the KJB owe its excellence? There are many. A cardinal virtue of the KJB is good rhythm- defined as a smooth flow of language, easy and pleasant to the ear. Its prose has a characteristic rise and fall, a back and forth quality, especially pleasing when the passage is read out loud

Latinate words are uncommon. Anglo-Saxon words comprise about 90% of the KJB. Its is simple, yet exalted. For instance, Abraham says Gen 18:3 'My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant."

So the backbone is simple language, elegantly used. What else do we find? The KJB use of vocabulary, syntax, phraseology, arrangement of material, and balance is striking. Figurative language, repetition, and attention-getters like "behold" and "verily" command our attention. The translators carried forward rhetorical techniques- such as heaven of heavens, Lord of hosts. They employed devices such as "gradation" in which the last key word is repeated as the first key word of the next phrase as in this example from Romans- "And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience,; and patience, experience; and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." Other familiar stylistic traits included the use of thee and thou,of noun-of noun construction, probably used in the original Hebrew bible, such as rod of iron, son of man, woman of Samaria, as well as noun + noun such as King of Kings, Holy of Holies.

These techniques yield a rhythmic smoothness, not only for narrative sections but also for conversation, as in 1 Cor; 13: 3- 7: "Although I bestore all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.....Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Tyndale had a remarkable capacity for coining phrases. The following (and many more) came directly from Tyndale; " let there be light", "the powers that be", "my brother's keeper", the salt of the earth", a law unto themselves", "filthy lucre", and "fight the good fight".

Alter's book, "Pen Of Iron", calls special attention to the repeated use of main clauses connected by "and". This form, called parataxis, produces a sense of continuity, of things flowing in sequence, of cause and effect. A passage from Mark will illustrate. Mark 4:36-39- "And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him, even as he was in the ship, and there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still: and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

Hemingway used this style extensively to give his prose its power. Alter suggests Hemingway wished to separate himself from the novelist style of the 1920s, consisting of numerous dependent clauses, and long complex sentences. So Hemingway went all the way back to the Hebrew Bible as translated into the KJB for his model. Note the parataxis in Hemingway's choice of prologue for "The Sun Also Rises", taken from Ecclesiastes. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever…. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hastest to the place where it arose."

The Gettysburg address offers another example of KJB influence on prose. The opening phrase "Fourscore and seven years ago" is clearly derived from the biblical "three score and ten", and carries a weight and solemnity absent from the simple "eighty-seven". It also allies the coming words with the majesty and veracity of scripture. Likewise note the concluding words- "We here highly resolve that

these dead shall not have died in vain, but that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth." The beauty and majesty of those words are clearly biblical, echoing the passage we read just a few minutes ago- "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things and endureth all things."

Next a look at poetry in the KJB. Scholars estimate that about one-third of the KJB is poetry. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, are entirely poetry. Most of Job is poetry, as are some potions of the Prophetic books. Only a small bit of the New Testament is considered poetry, including the Beatitudes, and a section of Luke that I quote later, as an example.

The translators did not arrange the poetry into verse form, and biblical poetry does not use rhyme or meter. How do we know if it is poetry or merely highly figurative prose? Scholars have relied mainly on the identification of familiar poetic characteristics such as metaphor, simile, repetition, allusion and metonymy as well as parallelism, of which a bit more later. Biblical poetry, like other fine poetry, has varied depths of meaning, emotional impact, and symbolism. The KJB poetry, as does its prose, relies heavily on imagery.

An example from Psalms 91:4-6-

'He shall cover thee with his feathers,
And under his wings shalt thy trust.
His truth shall be thy strength and buckler,
Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day,

Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness,
Nor the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

Another example of a KJB poetic mainstay is repetition. This from Luke 11: 9-10.

"Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth;
And to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

The most notable attribute of biblical poetry is parallelism- that is, a two-line unit in which the second line repeats all or part of the first line in different words or images. Two brief examples: the first from Psalms:

"The Lord watches over the way of the righteous
but the way of the wicked will perish."

Another from Job:

"What is man that he should merit?
That he born of woman should be in the right?"

Alter, in his book the "Art of Biblical Poetry" has analyzed the technique extensively, and points out the very sophisticated and diverse ways in which the second usage of the term or idea enhances, sharpens, and intensifies the first. Thus, the second term is more than a repetition of the first. Alter has found similar parallelism in Syrian literature from 1200 BC, probably dating several centuries before the biblical writing, suggesting a cross-cultural influence.

Note the parallelism, as well as the imagery, in this wonderful passage about the warhorse from Job 39: 21-25

He paweth in the valley, rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.
He mocketh at fear, and is not affrightened; neither turneth he back from the sword.
The quiver rattleth against him: the glittering spear and the shield.
He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trupet.
He saith among the trumpets Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off; the thunder of the captains and the shouting."

Patterns of poetry vary from biblical book to book. Psalms, for instance, were probably poems written to be sung to the accompaniment of the lyre. These poems are usually straight forward, but with a simplicity and beauty that has made the Psalms the most influential book in the bible. There are 150 psalms. I will read the first one: Again, please note the parallelism.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth will prosper.
The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement,, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

We find a different type of poem, more sensual and erotic, in the Song of Solomon. The writer was not Solomon, but an unknown author who wrote sometime after the exile in Babylon, about 5 centuries BC. Debate still continues as to whether this very passionate poem represents love between man and woman or is an allegory for love between man and God. Here is a short and familiar excerpt: Song of Solomon 2: 9-12. "My beloved is like a roe or a young hart; behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Secular or allegorical- who cares.

What has happened with the King James Bible after its publication in 1611? The public slowly accepted it, and over the ensuing years it became "The Bible" for almost all English and American Protestants as well as others all over the world. Over the past 50 or so years, however, scholars have raised several objections to the KJB. Recent research has yielded a wealth of previously undisclosed manuscripts which provide a richer base of knowledge, and so some of the KJB is simply outdated.. An occasional major change has made its way into new translations. For instance in Isaiah, in a sentence prophesying the birth of the Messiah, the original Hebrew word "almah"could be translated "virgin" or "young woman". The KJB translated it "virgin", but the modern translation used "young woman", a change of rather profound significance.

Not only have vastly more manuscripts of known gospels been found, but discovery of additional texts such as the Gnostic texts have opened an argument as to whether the canon should be enlarged or changed. Gnostic texts take a somewhat different view of creation and theology, and are less patriarchal, appealing to those interested in making the bible more gender neutral. New translations, eliminating gender preference, and even depicting God as feminine and/or black have appeared.

Lastly, a competing philosophy of translation is in vogue, called dynamic equivalence translation. It attempts to portray the meaning of the message in terms the reader can more easily comprehend, at the expense of fidelity to the original Hebrew and Greek. Many words used in the KJB 400 years ago are no longer used, or the meaning has shifted, or the usage just seems old fashioned. So these newer translations are designed to increase understanding. I found no data to confirm or refute this contention, however.

Many critics are scathingly critical of the literary value, or lack of it, of the modern translations. Whatever benefits in understanding these translations bring, their language does seem flat and dull compared to the KJB

As example:

KJB- many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

New Living Translation- The righteous face many troubles, but the Lord rescues them from each and every one.

The Message- Disciples so often get into trouble/ still God is there every time.

The translation process opens many opportunities for change from

the original. Inadvertent, as well as deliberate translation manuscript changes are well documented, as well as changes due to the myriad of translations. You may recall that Muslims believe that God directly dictated the Koran to Mohammed in Arabic. They will allow no translations into any other language for fear the divine message will be changed in some way. The bible, on the other hand has had a long history of contact with man. Oral stories came first, then writings in Hebrew, then several re-writings, multiple handwritten copies by scribes, translations into Greek, Latin, and multiple translations into English, as well as almost every language on earth. Finally, humans selected the books to be included and those to be left out. So for the bible, man played a prominent role in writing and choosing the biblical material. Obviously, if God has determined what we read today he must have worked through multiple individuals. In any event, the translators of the KJB did believe it was the word of God. Whether this is true or not cannot, to my knowledge, be proved or disproved.

The next generation of America writers and readers will be less influenced by and knowledgeable of the KJB. For hundreds of years, up through our generation, the KJB, its stories, its grandeur of language poured into us through daily contact with the culture, even if we had no direct church going experience. Writers did not need to go directly to the Bible; they had already absorbed its rhetorical manners, its cadences, its way of seeing the world. One can imagine Lincoln composing the Gettysburg, address, searching for the cadences, the simplicity of language, the grandeur of concept, possibly without a conscious thought about the KJB; simply producing a masterpiece that owes much of its

beauty and majesty to this same biblical heritage.

As one biblical critic has written, after attempting to analyze what makes the KJB so special, "I'm not sure, but something has fallen on the King James Bible like a benediction."

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Nicolson, Adam. God's Secretaries. Harper 2003

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MARY K AUSTIN

7087

California Table

5/16/2012

The Club Dinner: Richmond 6/12/12

1,000.00

SFFCU CHECKING * The Club Dinner: Richmond 6/12/12 1,000.00

ORNIA
TABLE

Cost Estimate
April 27, 2012

EVENT:	Archivist Dinner
DATE:	June 12th 2012
TIME	TBD
LOCATION:	Richmond
CLIENT:	June Goldsmith
CONTACT:	June Goldsmith
PHONE:	415.404.6078
E-MAIL:	june@archive.org
ADDRESS:	TBD

NO. OF GUESTS:	12	
FOOD:	$55 per person based on sample menu	$660.00
Beverage	Coffee/Tea/ Sparkling Water @ $5 per person	$60.00
STAFF	1 Chef @ $40/hr & 1 Server @ $25/hr –5 hr minimum	$325.00
RENTAL SERVICE:	N/A	

(Service charge covers production costs: site visits, telephone, transportation, insurance, office, printing, employee packing & travel time, tolls, & parking

EVENT SUBTOTAL	$1045.00
Service Charge 15%	$156.75
SUBTOTAL	$1,201.75
SALES TAX (8.5%)	$102.10
EVENT TOTAL	$1,303.89

Melissa Axel

407 Belvedere Street San Francisco, CA 94117
melissa@californiatable.net

P627402800N

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1 OF 2 F

ENV 11515

Claim Number:	51085518T00
Employee Name:	BREWSTER C KAHLE
Patient Name:	LOGAN KAHLE
Relationship:	SON
Patient Account No.:	
Plan Number:	00418306
Planholder:	INTERNET ARCHIVE
Provider:	NATALIA NIKOLAEFF SVENSSON, D
Date:	05/01/12

INSURED EXPLANATION OF BENEFITS - THIS IS NOT A BILL

Important! Save this statement for tax purposes.

Line No.	Submitted ADA Codes/Description	Alt Code	Tooth No.	Date of Service	Submitted Charge	Considered Charge	Covered Charge	Deductible Amount	Coverage Percent	Benefit Amount
1	D1110/ADULT PROPHY		FM	04/24/12	98.00	98.00	98.00		100%	98.00
2	D1206/FLRD VARNISH		FM	04/24/12	33.00	33.00	0.00		100%	0.00
				TOTALS	131.00	131.00	98.00		0.00	98.00

BENEFIT SUMMARY

TOTAL BENEFIT PAYABLE.........	**$98.00**
HIGHER ALLOWABLE.................	**$98.00**
PAID BY OTHER INSURANCE.....	**$0.00**
ADJUSTMENTS..............................	**$0.00**
TOTAL BENEFIT PAID.................	**$98.00**
PATIENT'S RESPONSIBILITY.....	**$33.00**

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Payment Amount: $98.00 **Payee:**NATALIA NIKOLAEFF SVENSSON, DDS

Comments

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ENV 11515 1 OF 2 B

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44 MONTGOMERY STREET, SUITE 2019
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94104
(415) 983-0200

April 2, 2012

Brewster T. Kahle & Mary Austin
Book Limited Partnership
513 B Simonds Loop
San Francisco, CA 94129-1140

Dear Brewster and Mary:

Enclosed is your 2011 Federal Return of Partnership Income. The original should be signed at the bottom of page one. No tax is payable with the filing of this return. Mail the Federal return on or before April 17, 2012 to:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE CENTER
OGDEN, UT 84201-0011

Enclosed is your 2011 California Partnership Return of Income. The original should be signed at the bottom of page one. There is a balance payable of $800. Mail the California return on or before April 17, 2012 and make check payable to:

FRANCHISE TAX BOARD — BOOK LIMITED
P.O. BOX 942857
SACRAMENTO, CA 94257-0601

Please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Michael

Michael Fontanello

From
personal checking

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→ into personal
Checking

MARY K AUSTIN 7121

California Table		6/14/2012	
	Final Bill for June 13 Club Dinner		29.39

SFFCU CHECKING *	Final Bill for June 13 Club Dinner	29.39

[illegible]
TABLE

Final Bill
June 14, 2012

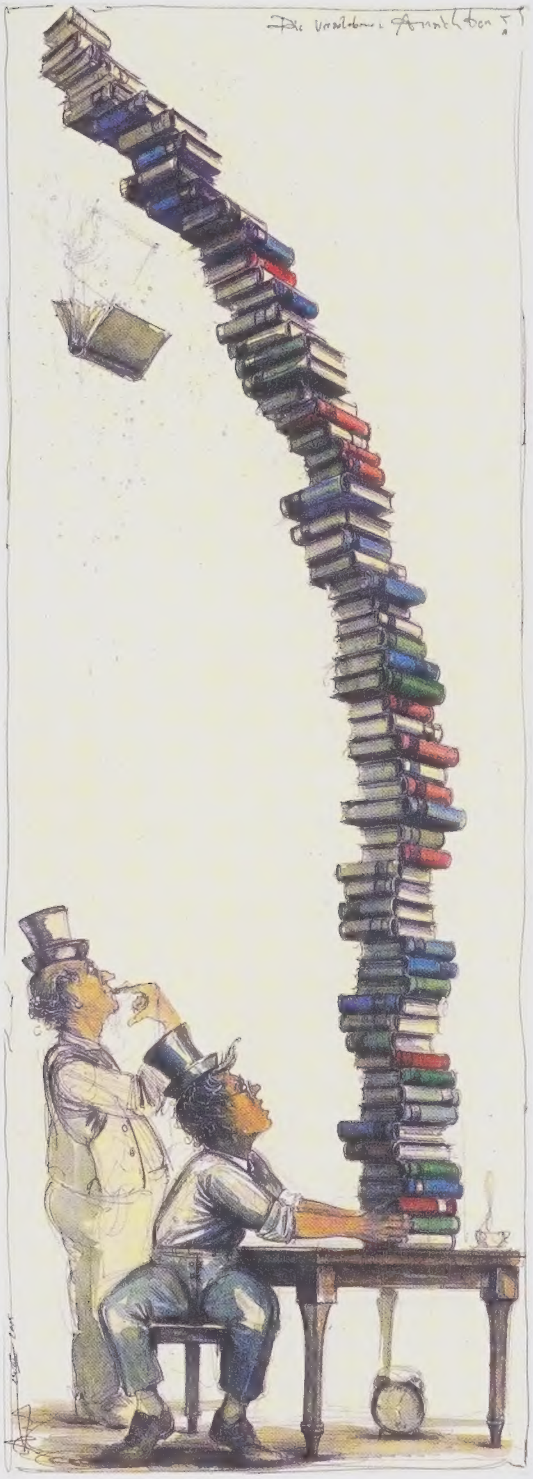
EVENT:	Archivist Dinner
DATE:	June 11th 2012
TIME	TBD
LOCATION:	Richmond
CLIENT:	June Goldsmith
CONTACT:	June Goldsmith
PHONE:	415.404.6078
E-MAIL:	june@archive.org
ADDRESS:	TBD

NO. OF GUESTS:	10	
FOOD:	$45 per person based on sample menu	$450.00
Beverage	Coffee/Tea/ Sparkling Water @ $5 per person	$50.00
STAFF	1 Chef @ $40/hr & 1 Server @ $25/hr –5 hr minimum	$325.00
RENTAL SERVICE:	N/A	

ENTERED

(Service charge covers production costs: site visits, telephone, transportation, insurance, office, printing, employee packing & travel time, tolls, & parking

EVENT SUBTOTAL	$825.00
Service Charge 15%	$123.75
SUBTOTAL	$948.75
SALES TAX (8.5%)	$80.64
EVENT TOTAL	$1029.39
DEPOSIT PAID	$1,000.00
AMOUNT DUE	$29.39


Die [illegible] Ansichten

The Club Dinner

6PM Monday

September 10th, 2012

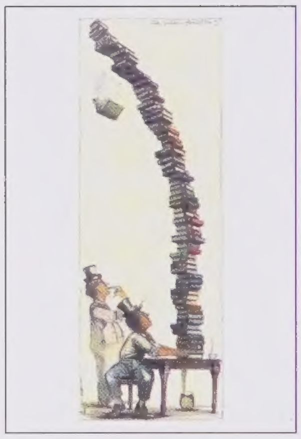
At The Library 2253 Union St. #101

San Francisco, CA

Paper by Bruce Sams

Host: David W. Pettus

RSVP: dwpettus@gmail.com



Die verschobenen Ansichten (A Change of Mind), 2005
Pen and India Ink, color pencil, and watercolor on paper, 70 x 25 cm
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LOST EMPIRES

Introduction – Lessons from Archeological Digs

Samuel Johnson suggested that, "books record all we can know about history." Archeologists disagree. "The artifacts found in the ground tell us far more than texts."

A small sop to the book lovers. Archeologists can only learn so much from the interpretation of beautiful 6,000-year-old statues. The facts of history are still influenced by someone's imagination, so both the authors and the diggers can be wrong. Many ancient texts are fiction, or have been lost. Thus, materials in the digs by the archeologists are vital for confirming and understanding ancient history. There is one book that has turned out to be the best history book ever written – and that is the Bible. So many of the stories that were thought to be myths, are proven to be factual. This includes lost cities only mentioned in the Bible that have recently been uncovered. These days, there is very little exposure to history in schools, particularly ancient history. There are, maybe, enough ancient souls in this audience who studied history and are curious about the past. We often forget that little was known about great civilizations until fairly recently. For example, the ability to understand the voluminous writings of ancient Egypt followed the translation of the Rosetta Stone. This occurred only a century ago. If you enjoy history some of these recent findings are priceless treasures.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the profession of archaeology became increasingly scientific. The discoveries were more carefully excavated and preserved. Carbon dating of rocks and mammalian DNA studies were becoming very accurate and informative. Some of this information is preserved in a fascinating book, "Ten Discoveries that Rewrote History"

written by a marvelous Stanford lecturer and archeologist, Patrick Hunt. (I recommend the book – you won't be able to put it down.) Other sources I have used are Encyclopedias and the Internet.

The discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Rosetta Stone, and the Tomb of 10,000 Chinese warriors were purely accidental. Other archeological discoveries were found after years of study and use of modern science. These latter triumphs are Troy, Akrotiri, Nineveh, Machu Picchu, and the work done in the Olduvai Gorge, where the Leakeys found Lucy, the oldest known hominid, 3.5 million years old. Modern archeological technology has often been responsible for revising history, when ancient texts are ambiguous or poorly written.

Humans (Homo Sapiens) assumed their modern form about 50,000 years ago The preceding species, the Neanderthal existed during the preceding 600,000 years. It was commonly thought that different species could not reproduce children. Recently, they have found humans contain a small amount (2%-4%) of Neanderthal DNA. Neanderthal brains were the same size as the modern human brain but they seemed to lack complex thought processes, artistic talent, or symbolic reasoning. The Neanderthals mysteriously vanished when humans appeared on the scene. Their disappearance may have been a change of climate or warfare. Stone aged modern humans left artwork in the form of cave drawings. These drawings date back at least 35,000 years and are considered beautiful today. Complex tools and agriculture made steady progress. Question? Are we approaching the end of the Homo Sapien species? Significant challenges like the atomic bomb or climate change could eradicate man .

We will discuss four thriving civilizations whose history had completely disappeared until recently. The oldest is China, where our story goes back 4,000 years. Then we will go to

the islands in the Aegean Sea where the little known Minoan culture was unearthed with its many surprises. The Minoan empire was dominant in the Mediterranean 3,600 years ago. The totally forgotten Assyrian empire, in what is now Iraq, ruled much of the developed western world in 900 BC. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has given us a contemporary documentation of the era between the 2nd century BC and the time of Christ.

The ancient mysteries of China and the early Christians era were exposed by total accident. These treasures were discovered within the last 75 years. Brilliant archeological reasoning unearthed the Assyrian and Minoan empires, "there must be a city there." Once found, the scholars were able to decipher their languages. Homer and the Bible alluded to some of these tales, but were often disbelieved as fiction, or a myth.

Now, as the archeologists say, "on with the digs." – To Akrotiri.

The Minoan Empire – 1620 BC

One of the most fascinating archeological discoveries occurred just forty-five years ago. The Minoan city called Akrotiri was buried under 50 to 150 feet of volcanic ash in 1620 BC. The city was on Thera, a beautiful island in the Aegean Sea, between Greece and Turkey. The Aegean Sea contains a number of islands that were controlled by the Minoan people, active during the Bronze Age, about 4,000 years ago. They dominated the near eastern countries and Mediterranean waters with a large fleet. At the time the Minoans were the only people daring or capable enough to brave the open seas. The Minoan capital was probably Crete, an island at the bottom of Greece. They kept a major portion of their fleet in the Crete port of Amnisos. The rest of the fleet was anchored at Thera. Commerce between Egypt,

Palestine, Spain, and with under-developed Turkey and Europe made the Minoans wealthy and powerful. Until uncovered fifty years ago, little was known about this culture.

An archeologist, Spyridon Marinatos, who recently died, had a theory he had developed after decades of research. He postulated that there was a buried city due to a volcanic eruption on Thera. He also wondered why had the prosperous Minoan culture disappeared suddenly? Was there a connection with these events? The findings exceeded everyone's imagination. The digs at Akrotiri on Thera, starting fifty years ago, connected the dots.

Prior to a huge volcanic eruption in 1620 BC, the island measured 100 square miles. The volcano destroyed ninety percent of this prosperous island, leaving a small land crescent, curling around a huge caldera. The ancient city, Akrotiri, sat on a high cliff. At first, few pieces of pottery, then a beautiful vase were first found. Marinatos then knew he was on to something. The dig was on. Professor Marinatos trained his local helpers in the modern scientific techniques. The loose volcanic ash created a permanent casting of the rooms and their furniture. Under 150 feet of ash they found a 4,000-year-old city with 2 and 3 multi-storied homes, paved streets, flushing toilets, and gorgeous artwork. The homes, two and three stories high had multiple windows and doors with wooden frames. The number of inhabitants was thought to be in the many thousands. Later, archeologists would say, "Thera…must rank as the best preserved prehistoric site, perhaps in the world." To date, this city is only 30% excavated, and the digs are going on today.

With modern science everything can be dated. The events leading up to the destruction of Thera can be accurately described. First, in 1620 BC there were earthquakes, then an enormous volcanic eruption, which was near the largest in history. The ash is found

as far away as Palestine and Turkey. The great volcano unleashed a giant tsunami that quickly spread to Crete. The harbor of Amnisos, sheltering a large part of the Minoan fleet, was demolished. This has been documented with underwater exploration. The Minoan empire was fatally weakened. Within 100 years it ceased to exist, and most of its glories lost.

What else did they find in this remarkable buried city—only 2.5 acres have been excavated. The multi-storied homes contained many beautiful pieces of art. Hundreds of paintings and frescoes depict animals and Minoan customs that were commonly copied in Egypt and North Africa, showing a close connection.

The Minoans accumulated their wealth and power from commercial trade. They became the dominant force of the Mediterranean, coastal Turkey, and Africa. Egypt remained independent. The Minoans had a monopoly of a very dense stone called carborundum or emery. This was only found on a nearby island of Naxus. This rock has a hardness coefficient of 9—diamonds being a 10. The next rock has a coefficient of 7. Carborundum was unique, having the hardness necessary to accurately grind building stones fine enough for a perfect fit. It was also used to polish jewelry and sharpen weapons. The Minoans were somehow able to carve beautiful sculptures out of this stone. By virtue of military dominance and ability to transport goods over open seas, they developed extensive trade in foods and building materials. Their unique trade with Egypt helps to explain how they developed such a high standard of living. The Egyptians were willing to pay dearly for carborundum. They used it extensively for building their pyramids and massive temples.

Following the devastating volcanic eruption and their fleet's destruction, new sea-going competitors defeated the weakened Minoan dynasty. First, the Myceneans, precursors of the ancient Greeks, and finally the Phoenicians brought an end to the Minoan empire.

We come to the most exciting discoveries to emerge from the Thera digs. Many experts in seismology and archeology have felt strongly that Akrotiri is the famous lost city of Atlantis. Many have put the ancient dots together and believe they have solved the ancient mystery. Maybe another civilization will be discovered to be the answer, but for now Thera fits the fable. Professor Hunt states that Plato's description "is uncanningly close to the events that occurred at Thera and probably no longer a myth." Plato believed the story was true, writing 1,000 years after the event. Plato, a source of the tale, wrote in the 4th century BC:

> "Now in this island of Atlantis there was a great and wonderful city which had rule over the whole island and several others, and over parts of the continent, and furthermore, the men of Atlantis had subjected the parts of Libya within the columns of Heracles as far as Egypt, and of Europe as far as Tyrrhenia…But afterwards there occurred violent earthquakes and floods; and in a single day and night of misfortune all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea. For which reason the sea in those parts is impassable and impenetrable, because there is a shoal of mud in the way; and this was caused by the subsidence of the island. "

This city on Thera, buried under volcanic ash, is a credible explanation of Plato's fable. Possibly, Minoan survivors and an occasional eyewitness were able to keep this dramatic story alive for 1,000 years, until Plato brought it to light. The decades of study and an educated guess by Professor Marinatos gave the world a wonderful archeological treasure.

Nineveh 900-612 BC

The English lawyer, Ansted Layard, like many Anglicans, took the Bible seriously. He was particularly interested in archeology, and specifically the Bible's account of the fall of Nineveh. In 1850, he became a diplomat in Turkey and obtained permission to dig near Mosul, on the Tigris River halfway north from the delta of the Euphrates, where he thought Nineveh might exist. He found a huge city covering 1,800 acres and 7 miles long. Layard, a unique individual, changed the world's history.

Again, we are talking about a city demolished—lost to history so thoroughly that it was mentioned only in the Bible. Voltaire stated, around 1700 A.D. that, "like much in the Bible it is just a myth, Nineveh does not exist." In 612 BC, Nineveh was destroyed by surrounding armies and buried under tons of dirt. After it was excavated it proved to be one of the world's greatest ancient cities.

In the first millennium BC, the world had changed considerably. People became mobile with sea-going ships. Better armaments, both defensive and offensive, due to more sophisticated metallurgy became available. The Assyrians took advantage of all of the new tools of aggression, and conquered the wealthy states of the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean. Their capitol was Nineveh, a city situated near Mosul on the Tigris River, which is now Iraq.

The Assyrians were a warrior nation that conquered and dominated the existing empires in the Western world. Yet, their capital lay buried beneath the earth and completely unknown to the world until discovered by Layard in 1850. Modern technology is still bringing to light an amazing story. It is incredible that this powerful empire's existence vanished from all knowledge.

It is estimated that over 100,000 people lived in Nineveh during the supremacy of the Assyrian Empire. The enclosing walls were 30 feet high. The Emperor Sennacherib's palace measured 650 ft. x 600 ft. and contained 80 rooms, decorated with reliefs and paintings. The Assyrians captured most of the Middle East with large armies, hated throughout Mesopotamia because of their cruelty. The empire became very wealthy living off of booty and slavery. Finally, the Babylonians, Persians, and other surrounding vassal states combined and defeated the Assyrians in 612 BC. The destruction of the hated Assyrian cities was complete—burning, and then burying them under tons of earth. The only items left were remnants of stone walls and buildings, and the precious artifacts from the Assyrian library.

The digs at Nineveh in 1850 produced amazing and wonderful surprises. The most astonishing finding was the Assyrian library containing 10,000 stone tablets. An Assyrian king, Nebuchadnezzar, who was intensely interested in history, collected the tablets of the library around 800 BC. He employed countless scribes to translate the ancient histories of the old Sumeria, Akkad, and Babylonian cultures. The king made sure that all were deciphered and written with cuneiform script. These tablets add an extra 1,000 years of forgotten history to our knowledge. The writings were much older than the Bible. They covered 3,000 years of little known ancient history. Many of the treasures of the Middle East, including the tablets, ended up in British museums. This plundered art, however, may well have been damaged or lost if left in these warring states.

The tablets contained descriptions of ancient science, medicine, and poetry. The ancient Code of Hammurabi was found. Many of the tablets were well preserved because the fire during Nineveh's destruction transformed the soft mud bricks into ceramic-like stones.

The Assyrian culture was also preserved by these findings. The diggers found reliefs on the palace walls depicting their conquests. These freely showed their cruelty in many battles. One masterpiece relief shows the destruction of Judean cities. An artist's rendering of a lion hunt would be difficult to match in elegance today. Their jewelry and solid gold helmets again reveal a sophisticated culture during the Bronze Age.

The Flood Tablet from the library was another unsuspected jewel. The tablet only measures 7 in. x 6 in. It was found among the 10,000 tablets. Most of us had grown up knowing the story of Noah and the Ark; believing the story originated in the Bible, this tablet preceded the Biblical account, by many centuries. "It was an unknown account that told of a man named Utnapishtim, who built a boat at God's urgent command and filled it with all forms of life. When the rains came, the earth was flooded for six days and all humanity was destroyed except for Utnapishtim and those on his boat. Later, they released doves, but they came back. A raven was released and never returned, so they knew that it had found dry land, and the world was saved" The Flood Tablet surprised the historians, and changed history.

There is a strong suspicion of the experts that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were actually in Nineveh. The have found multiple terraces with extensive aqueducts leading to deep holes that probably contained large trees. Babylon lacks this evidence. Beautiful gardens at Nineveh are described in the tablets.

Tomb of the 10,000 Warriors – 250 BC – A history of the inscrutable East is accidentally uncovered, just 50 years ago

Another archeological finding gives us an invaluable insight into Chinese culture, past and present. This is the recent, totally accidental, discovery in 1974 called the Tomb of 10,000

Warriors. China had always been shrouded in mystery. This extensive civilization remained inscrutable to the West for centuries. Natural barriers that have kept many unwelcome forces out protect China. There are the Himalayas, the largest mountains in the world to the north. To the west is the Gobi Desert, and the Pacific Ocean protects the southeastern borders. The Yangtze and the Yellow Rivers furnish reliable transportation from north to south. It wasn't until Marco Polo returned from his trip to China did Europe have a westerner describe a few of the amazing achievements in China.

In 1974, during a drought, in the central portion of China, a group of farmers gathered to dig a water well . At about 13 feet they hit something hard. This proved to be the head, and eventually the body of an ancient terracotta warrior statue. Beijing sent trained archeologists to supervise the dig. They found over 7,000 ceramic warriors along with writings and artwork in almost perfect condition, The site was near the ancient city of Xi'an. It turned out to be the largest mausoleum in the world. It also contained thousands of artifacts. This was the tomb of Emperor Quin, who was the first to unify China, around 250 years BC. Prior to the Quin Emperor, China was an unruly mix of separate warring districts and cities.

The Quin Dynasty changed China drastically. He was extremely cruel, uprooting thousands, killing and torturing many, but he accomplished his goals. He decreed a single language and attempted to eliminate education and the scholarly Mandarins. He established an accurate census that allowed him to tax the individual. This, of course, filled the central government's coffers. His brutal politics have recurred many times in China, from the ancient 3rd century BC to the present day. Mao Tse Tung knew his history well and copied many of Quin's policies.

The Quin dynasty lasted fifty years until he Quin died in 259 BC. The Chinese empire broke up, but was reformed by a more benevolent rule. The Han dynasty was established a generation later and flourished for 400 years (200 BC–200 AD). This history reminds you of China today, which has kept central government control, but encourages capitalism and education. Some say, "modern China is a paradox that has imbibed the best of both Marxism and capitalism."

Unearthing the artifacts and writings of the Quin dynasty found in the tomb allowed archeologists to put together the foundations of early China, a marvelous story. The fired clay (terracotta) and remarkable metallurgy kept the terracotta warriors in almost perfect condition. The tomb's advanced technology and records reveal a culture of that era superior to that of the West. The soldiers revealed a disciplined army. There were crossbows with arrows so highly developed, that they could penetrate metal armor. Their ability to manipulate tin, copper, and other metal alloys, are a match of modern metals. These artifacts found in the Tomb of Warriors, just 40 years ago, have furnished a unique education of the mysteries of the Far East.

During the benevolent Han dynasty, when the Silk Road was the trade connection to the West, the Roman Empire and other European states paid large sums for Chinese silk, bone chinaware, and bronze vases. These luxury items were followed in later centuries by China's introduction of gunpowder, scripted ink paper, and currency. Periodically, China has prospered.

Dead Sea Scrolls – 250 BC to 70 AD

On the edge of the Dead Sea, facing the ruins of the ancient city of Qumran, are mountains with sheer cliffs. In 1947 (only 65 years ago), two Bedouin boys slipped into the top of a cave and found a few old scroll fragments that changed forever our knowledge of the Near East at the time of Christ. The Scrolls focus on an era between 70 AD and 250 BC. This was an era that the Judaic and Christian cultures lacked a written account. 70 A.D. is the date the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. The Dead Sea Scrolls therefore are the "oldest biblical manuscript material yet known." (Hunt) The Christian religion had a similar void of documentation until the Middle Ages when the Christian Bible (Old and New Testament) was written. These older "scrolls have changed our perceptions of the Jewish and Christian religions."

Tradition of Jewish faith dates back another 1,000 years to 1300 BC. This new treasure consisted of over 850 scrolls mainly written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

The previous oldest manuscript of Jewish scripture were the papyrus parchment fragments found in Egypt, which had been gathered by rabbis during the first century B.C.. During that time, Judea had revolted against Roman rule along with areas of Britain, Netherlands. The Jews felt that Emperor Nero was so weak, the Roman Empire would collapse. To be safe, all the available ancient writings were sent surreptitiously to the caves at Qumran. The Romans sent an army there to suppress the Jews and to take over a profitable nearby oasis (called En Gedi). The Jews were finally beaten at Masada. Jerusalem and the great Jewish Temple was destroyed and burned. The Arc of the Covenant disappeared. To this day no one knows what was in it. Some say just the 10 Commandments—others say a Jewish equivalent of the Old Testament. The two Bedouin boys never realized how hugely valuable these old fragments of parchment were.

The trail of the 850 scrolls and fragments became extremely convoluted. The boys turned what they had found over to a friend who paid them $35. The Christian Arab friend gave them to his Catholic Archbishop in Jordan. For the next 50 years they traveled to Jordan, then, back and forth to the United States (Huntington Museum, Waldorf Astoria Hotel)—all for safekeeping. Many changes were occuring in the Near East due to sectional wars. All the while the contents of the scrolls were carefully suppressed except for a few scholars. The reason for the secrecy remains a mystery.

Finally in 1991, the scrolls were microfilmed and the contents published. By very clever subterfuge, a fictitious man bought the scrolls for $25,000 and they ended up in the Jewish Museum in Jerusalem. They still haven't all been translated. The details of the scroll's wild trail of travel tax one's imagination. Despite the fierce arguments by modern scholars about the contents—both Jewish and Christian religions have survived the revelations.

The contents of the writings in the scrolls were both religious and secular. One secular metal scroll may well have been the inventory of gold in the Jewish treasury in Jerusalem. Incidentally, the gold was never found in Qumran caves. The scroll's scriptural contents included Torah law, Books of Genesis, Isaiah's story, and Psalms. Some writings have been discredited, like the Book of Magic. There is no mention of Jesus. This is understandable as the Christians were a tiny group in 60 AD. Also, it was quite dangerous for them to openly profess their faith to either the Romans or the Jews. The Old and New Testaments were finally written by the Christians around 300-400 AD. Quoting Professor Hunt, the scrolls are "a biblical treasure of intriguing history that transformed Biblical scholarship."

The history of the ancient civilizations are surprising and fascinating. There is a great saying that, "those who don't know history are bound to repeat it". Today, history is barely

being taught in most schools. Is our civilization in trouble? I have no idea. The far advanced Minoan commercial empire was destroyed by a volcano and tsunami. The loss of their protective fleet was paramount. Assyria disappeared when their money ran out. China's population couldn't stomach the total subjugation of the individual. Rome fell with weak emperors and more aggressive neighbors.

Is our culture in trouble? Can we run out of money? Will the wisdom of our founding fathers prevail? Time will tell !

Barrett H. Weber

June 11, 2012

A PRIMER ON BRIDGES

Lawrence W. Jordan Jr.

> *"The world is merely a bridge: ye are to pass over it, and not build your dwellings upon it.*
>
> Inscription on gate in India

ON YOUR imaginary forces work", directs one of Shakespeare's choruses, and fly back through the perfumed clouds of marriage and parenthood and the acrid fears of war and depression to the spring of 1937. There see a lad of 13 years, his mother, brother, and a friend walking together with some 200,000 other souls in stunned awe over the longest span ever built by man. The excitement of that day and the majesty of the structure may have long been dulled for that lad by indifference engendered from countless crossing of that same span in years since, but not the appreciation of the concept, design, and construction of the Golden Gate Bridge. I was that lad and what follows is his appreciation of the impressive art of bridging

We, that is civilization, have had bridges "always with us". Homer talks of bridges, Herodotus, 2500 years ago describes a bridge in Babylon. Oxford is named after a crossing of the River Thames and Cambridge after one over the River Cam. Dartmoor in southwest England is peppered with simple thick, unchiseled stone slabs, called clapper bridges, crossing brooks, creeks and the like. Dr John Watson describes one of these simple structures in

Hampshire near the scene of a suspected murder in his account entitled *The Problem of Thor Bridge*. More complicated was the structure in the classic movie *The Bridge on the River Kwai* an actual cantilever bridge constructed for the film in Ceylon and finally blown up in front of a host of cameras. Wider crossings, such as of rivers and canyons, by nature, require more elaborate structures. Ancient and modern engineering met the challenge in a superb and often beautiful manner.

Simply put a bridge consists of a span of some material—vines, rope, stone, wood (logs or boards), iron or steel, concrete, or combinations of all of these. Elemental is the truth that whatever is used in its construction the span must: A, support itself in some manner, B, support the load it is designed to carry, C, contain a safety factor. It might be an easy matter to design a suspension bridge across the English Channel but it would be as simple for an engineer to determine that the lengthy cable required could not possibly support itself much less a load. The million or so highway bridges in the United States adhere to this truth.

Recognizable are five traditional types: beam or girder, arch, cantilever, suspension and cable-stayed. The east span of the SF Bay bridge when completed is a relatively new concept: self-anchored suspension bridge. Others include moveable (draw and swing) bridges and portable (Bailey). Herodotus mentions a pontoon bridge across the Hellespont in 481 B.C. and there is one such today in Seattle. And there may be combinations of these. During the World War many bridge spans in Europe were destroyed although their foundations were sound enabling

new ones to be build resting on them. Then a modern concept came into being, the cable-stayed bridge, a local example is the Sundial Bridge in Redding, California.

The attendant forces in bridges is also of note: in beam bridges it is compression, down to the ground on the two support columns; the arch compresses both down and out; the tension in suspension bridges pulls outward from the anchorages and compresses down at the top of the towers holding up the cables. The wind across the span is another force that absolutely must be considered.

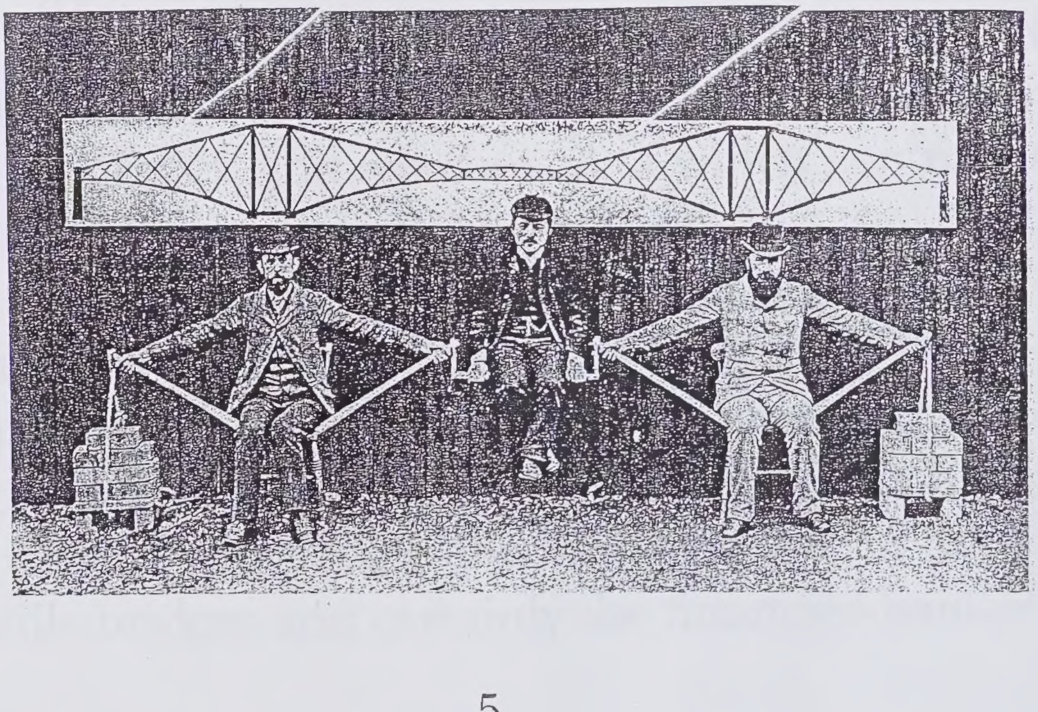
Ancient engineers used stone, brick and cement fashioned into arches: some such bridges exist today and are of incredible beauty. Construction of arches, as well as domes, traditionally, has been possible only by the use of centering or falsework. First a wooden scaffolding was constructed the exact but convex shape of the designed arch. This structure supports from below the brick or stone and mortar arms of the structure until the keystone or last stone was placed between the two joining halves of the arch. The forces are then transferred to the immovable abutments at each end. The centering would then be dismantled and the arch would thereafter support itself. As we will see the necessity of staging was a severe limitation on the use of such bridges. Today arch bridges grace ravines, bays, and rivers in many sites, Oregon, Switzerland, and France to name only a few locales. Sadly, travelers ordinarily are ignorant of the beauty of these graceful arches traveling over their flat roadways rather than under or aside them.

Scouring, the washing away of whatever support the constructed span or its bottom may have had by moving water, created a threat for any builder where the foundations were shallow and accounted for countless failures of past bridging. But how to build a sturdy foundation in running water? Historically, the early answer was to build what was known as a cofferdam. This in essence was a wall of double piling around the proposed foundation site, the space between the rows of piling was filled with clay and bailing then pumping the water out of the enclosure. Mud or rock would then be removed from the bottom of the enclosure and the foundation constructed on firm ground. When the bridge's foundation reached a point above the water level the dam would then be removed and the span would be then constructed.

Since the mid 1850s caissons solved this problem. Fabricated near the site for the bridge it was in essence a box with an open end. The edge of the bottom open end was of sharp steel or iron. Towed to the construction site it was upended into the water with the open end down into the mud or sand and became an air-tight chamber. Air pumped into the caisson forced the water out. Workmen entered through an airlock and dug, drilled, blasted, the enclosed sand, rock, and mud. The loose material was dredged out through the lock. As the bottom deepened the caisson dropped aided by weighs added to the top, and the air pressure increased to keep the water out. This additional weight was designed to be the finished underwater support for the bridge. When bedrock was reached the void was filled with concrete.

All this was well and good but there were serious health problems that developed among the workers under heightened air pressure in the caisson. We know them today as the bends. Under higher air pressure nitrogen enters the blood stream and if not released slowly resulted in excruciating pain or death. The situation was long unrecognized and bizarre remedies were prescribed. Some workers were issued bands of silver and zinc to be wrapped around wrists, ankles, arms and stomachs or placed under the soles of their feet. Eventually, exiting workers were subjected to slow decompression and the problem was solved but only after much human suffering and even fatalities.

Another concept involved in bridge building is canted lever or cantilever. A simple example would be a diving board; an open kitchen drawer is another. In a word a cantilever is simply a brace where one arm is unsupported and the other is firmly attached to a solid base. A century and a half ago the principle was graphically illustrated for the Forth Bridge in Scotland using two men supporting a third.



Use of the cantilever can be the essence of a bridge itself or a portion of one or as staging in the construction of another type of bridge as we will see.

Another spectacular class of bridges is suspension one and its modern cousin, the cable-stayed bridge. Denizens of the Bay Area may be calloused in appreciation of the incredible beauty driving south through the Waldo Tunnel of the framed view of the North Tower of the Golden Gate Bridge but it is breathtaking! The basic elements of suspension bridges are two towers, one in the case of cable-stayed bridges, the long inverted arch of ~~the~~ cable or chain, anchorages for each end, and the roadway. This arch is technically known as a cantenary one, that is the curve assumed to approximate that of a loose heavy cord or chain hanging freely from two points. An example is the huge Gateway monument in St. Louis. Early cables were laid and then lifted into place to hang from the two towers. Innovations soon developed and these cables were spun in place between their anchorages and over the towers. Smaller cables were dropped to which the roadway was suspended.

Over time in the 19th century bridging tools improved with the use of steam: steam driven drills, excavators, cranes, and winches all of which contributed to progress.

Engineering is only one of a myriad of disciplines involved in modern bridge building. Architecture vies with engineering in the production of the final product and has saved many concepts from becoming monstrosities. Politics has influenced one way or another worthwhile bridges and certainly the financier-banker must

be reckoned with, as must the geologist, metallurgist, artist, military strategists, competing ferry operators and engineers, and of course, lawyers. One scholar put it: "…these accounts hold our attention because they speak of timeless forces—human nature, impersonal dynamics, petty politics, big business, competition, and economics." [1]

With these sparse, elementary, principles in mind we can examine a few specific applications of them to famous bridges.

THE EADS BRIDGE

Father of the first steel bridge in American and longest bridge across the Mississippi River was James Eads. He began his illustrious career salvaging cargo from sunken shipwrecks in the Mississippi River. At this work he became proficient in the use of diving bells, a device with an open bottom and a bench where a diver could sit surrounded by compressed air and search the river bottom for hulks. Attaching ropes, the wreck or treasure could be raised and taken ashore. He became engrossed with the idea of a bridge across the Mississippi at St. Louis. The most feasible in his opinion would be a multiple arch bridge but the staging required in engineering at the time was not feasible because of volume of the traffic on the river. So, he reasoned, why not hold the paired arches up during construction until they were married in their centers and obviate the need of staging? He also personally studied the use in Europe of the pneumatic caisson. All this and the many other considerations required in bridge building he

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[1] Petroski, H. *Remaking the World,* 1997, p.82

put together in an eventual and successful scheme to bridge the Mississippi River. It was the first bridge made of steel.

The caissons were fabricated and put in place and construction commenced. Because of scouring Eads insisted that the piers rested on bedrock. Sand pumps removed the unwanted material and tons of rock which were fashioned into the piers were piled on top of the caisson driving it into the riverbed. Interestingly, ladies and gentlemen were welcome (without hardhats) down into the bottom of the pressurized caisson! Sadly, work in the chamber's pressurized interior caused mysterious serious and 15 deadly injuries now known as "bends".

When bedrock was found and the piers reached the surface of the river construction of the bridge itself was commenced. As the arch across the river grew a wooden tower was also built above the pier and cables attached to the outreaching arm holding it in its proper position. Matching work also proceeded from the opposite pier until they met in the center of the span when they were to be joined together. But at that point an unprecedented and lengthy heat baked St. Louis and the arms of the span expanded some 8 inches making the joint impossible. Ice applied to the steel was ineffective so a screw device designed by Eads was utilized effectively spreading the halves enough so that they could be joined. The wooden cantilever structure and cables were removed and the roadway completed. Traffic crossed the bridge in 1874 and is still crossing it today.

Ead's design was thereafter used in many bridges modified in some sites by not having the arms of the

arches meet but lifting a truss section from a barge to fill the gap.

THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE

In a 1886 Currier and Ives print of New York towering above the town stands the tall, massive and majestic Brooklyn Bridge; solitary in its size except for the Statute of Liberty and the often seen Trinity Church. Its beauty has endured and its construction innovative. Its creator was John Roebling, a German Emigrant who established a steel wire mill in Trenton, New Jersey. He had constructed several suspension bridges and then developed plans for a bridge between New York City and Brooklyn. He believed a suspension bridge would be suitable for the site and proceeded to market successfully the idea. He was appointed Chief Engineer of the project. Sadly and ironically, as the project began, Roebling's foot was injured by a docking Fulton ferry. It was thought that the injury was slight but it soon developed into lockjaw and he died in excruciating pain. His son, Washington, with a distinguished and relevant Civil War army career, ably took over as supervising engineer. He spent much time within the caisson with too brief withdrawal times and developed serious and almost fatal illness from the bends. This debilitation caused much of his supervision to be conducted from his bed with the indispensable assistance of his mathematically trained wife, Emily. She became his surrogate by all accounts in supervising construction of the bridge.

The huge caissons were constructed in a nearby shipyard and towed to the site, upended and sunk in place. They were, at the time, the largest ever used, measuring 168' long and 102' ~~long~~ wide, their surface areas would each hold four tennis courts with room to spare. The roof, designed to support the massive granite piers and drive the caisson down, was made up four courses of 1' x 1' 'sticks' of dense yellow pine doused with creosote as a preservative. As the lower knife sliced its way downward the pitmen hacked, drilled and blasted the bottom mud, rock, and sand until bedrock was reached always aware that the caisson must be kept in a vertical position as it sank. At that point, as noted the working area was cleared and filled with concrete.

The towers were then constructed out of granite blocks as were the monstrous abutments which would secure the ends of the cables. Then came the cables themselves. Heretofore, the cables used in suspension bridges were twisted wire, similar to rope, laid out in place and lifted over the supporting towers. This was not feasible in the case of the Brooklyn Bridge so the Roebling genius flowered again: the wire strands would be spun between the towers high above the river and its traffic. It was first proposed to haul the initial cable across the East River on Sunday when the river traffic was light; the normal flow was about 100 ships per hour. But a closer count noted sufficient breaks to transport it "when ready". So one Monday morning a rock scow was loaded with the cable end and a reel of cable and moved by two tugs to the New York side. When it reached shore it was hauled by a hemp rope up and over the tower and down to the New York

The larger cannons were manhandled as it neared the [illegible] and moved to the site, assembled, and [illegible] in place. In general, in the case of the larger guns, [illegible] positions.

The [illegible]

City anchorage. After that success lesser cables-cat walks, towing, and boson chairs were hauled across in preparation for spinning of the suspension cables. Roebling designed a dolly, called a traveler, which moved over the towers to and fro from the abutments carrying loops of wire. Each loop was then attached to steel eyes imbedded in the anchorages and the dolly returned to the other side with another loop. Roebling specified that the final span would contain 5282 steel wires each a little over 1/8 of an inch in diameter lain parallel. The total length of wire was14,000 miles! The correct tension of each wire was adjusted every night when the ambient temperatures were lower. A year and four months after commencement the spinning was completed.

The next step was to compress the strands with a clamp that squeezed the strands tightly together and the bundle wrapped with soft wire. Then the cables holding the roadway were dropped from the curved one and the roadway attached to them. The long approaches were completed and on May 24,1883 the beautiful and graceful bridge opened. Sadly, Roebling watched the ceremonies through field glasses from his bedside.

THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

It is difficult to find a more inhospitable site on earth for a structure than the entrance to San Francisco Bay, the Golden Gate. Since discovery, fogs, storms, tides and currents, and winds, have wrecked countless ships in its vicinity. The Gate is a scant twelve miles from the threat of the worrisome San Andreas fault. It was not only the physical sciences that extended the incubation of the bridge project to scores of years: political sciences spun its web as

well. The military asked if the bridge would endanger the country's defenses; as the army was giving both bridge approaches, thus obviating the cumbersome eminent domain procedures, the gift had its price; some of the north coast counties wanted no part of membership in the district necessary to finance the bridge; Southern Pacific Railroad, owners of the profitable ferry service to Marin County, felt the bridge unsafe. Congress, State and local governments contributed volumes to the debate affecting the physical and financial feasibility, design, and desirability of it. On the other hand, spanning the headlands of the bay had been a challenge to men since the late eighteen hundreds and more so since the early 20th century. Ferry service became less and less attractive to growing populations. The dream of a bridge was a popular one and finally a compelling one.

Devising a character more attractive to public invective than Joseph Strauss, the chief engineer for design and construction of the bridge, would be a large task. A small man with an engineering talent if not an engineering degree he was voted class president and class poet by his college class. He was difficult, opinionated, often unreasonable, and grossly unfair to his indispensable assistants. As one biographer put it: "he was a strange mixture of conflicting traits: promoter, mystic, tinkerer, dreamer, tenacious hustler, publicity seeker, recluse".[2] But promoter he was and he worked the crowd for over 10 years before he scored.

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[2] *The Gate,* van der Zee, 1986, p. 29

Strauss's prior bridge building credentials consisted entirely in movable ones; the supremely ugly 4th street drawbridge in San Francisco, still in use, is his other monument. His 1921 drawing of his proposed structure was a monstrosity. Whether an ugly mixture of cantilever and suspension principles was to be allowed to mar the most beautiful aspect in the world was finally answered in the negative. For several compelling reasons a pure suspension bridge was the selection but the required single span of 4200' would be far and away be the longest ever attempted. Wiser and more sensitive heads devised the grace and beauty that the bridge finally assumed. The aesthetics of the bridge, the fluted panels bracing the openings of the towers above the roadway (in contrast to the cross bracing beneath it), the design of the lamp posts, hand rail, the color of the whole bridge were contributions by able men and sadly never acknowledged by Strauss. Not until May, 2007 was Charles Ellis given major credit for the magnificent design of the bridge.

Construction began January 5, 1933 with the first shovel of earth removed by worthies. The foundations for the huge towers and the abutments necessary to hold the two cables were the first major projects. All had to reach a solid base. Of the construction of the two towers that of the North tower was the simplest. A shallow cofferdam was constructed just off shore, the water pumped out and the soft mud on top of the bedrock scooped out and the footing filled with concrete.

The south tower was immensely more complicated to build. It was to be constructed some 1100 feet from shore in swift currents and required a steel access

trestle to be built to reach the pier site. (120 feet of which were demolished when an outbound freighter smashed into it.) A huge caisson, built in Alameda, was towed and set into place. Digging, blasting and dredging removed material until bedrock was reached. Concrete completed the pier's foundation. The steel towers, fabricated in the East, were then placed and riveted together.

The spinning of the two cables was the next step. This was essentially the same procedure as that followed in the Brooklyn Bridge with a couple of differences. Running the pilot cable to the opposite shore caused the entire channel to be closed by the Coast Guard to shipping on August 2, 1935. This was in preference to trying to thread it between the traffic on the bay. The 80,000 miles of cable required came from the Roebling plant in New Jersey in small rolls and were spliced together at the site. The cable was of a higher strength than that of the Brooklyn Bridge and could not be bent by strong hands and arms. The spinning was accomplished by the running loops of cable between the anchorages except that in mid-span the dollies stopped the loops exchanged and then returned whence they came, thus saving much time.

Seventy five years ago on May 27, 1937 the bridge opened to pedestrians and the next day to motorists. The statistics of the structure were impressive and exceeded existing ones by wide margins; the aesthetic values were equally stunning.

But the bad taste fostered by Strauss's behavior dulled the excitement. There was later strife over the placement of the statue of the Chief Engineer resulting

in moving it from overseeing the Golden Gate to a less prominent one

EPILOGUE

In the showcase of great bridges it may be an impudent intrusion to display the Sundial Bridge: nonetheless it is remarkable one. A small, 720 feet long self-anchored suspension bridge with a 217 foot high pylon, tilted at an angle of some 125 degrees from the walkway it was designed solely for pedestrians. It gracefully spans the Sacramento River in Redding, California. On June 21 each year the shadow of the pylon on the river bank tells true sun time. Designed by Santiago Calatrava, a Spanish-Swiss architect and engineer whose airports, stadiums, railroad stations throughout the world are true art. Fashioned with steel, glass and granite this bridge is unique in the United States. Paid for with local funds it is beautiful, and notable. Above all this bridge says a great deal about the city of Redding perhaps not as much as Roebling's, or Ead's or Strauss's structures to their respective locations but enough.

March, 2012

Further Reading:

Engineers of Dreams, Petroski, Henry, 1995
The Gate, Van Der Zee, John, 1986
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The Encyclopedia Britannica, passim
New York Times, Feb.7, 2012, p. D1

EUGENE ONEGIN

A Novel in Verse
by
Alexander Pushkin

Book 2
Part 2

O Rus!
—Horace

Rendered into English
by
S. Hamm

Literal translation
by
Vladimir Nabokov

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May 14, 2012

21.

She'd caught his eye when he was merely
A boy, untouched by passion's flames;
He'd gaze on little Olga, clearly
Enchanted by her childish games.
There, sheltered by the shady bowers,
The two of them would play for hours,
And one day he would take her hand—
Or so their doting fathers planned.
In rustic solitude abiding,
A charming innocent, she grew
Before her parents' eyes into
A lily of the valley, hiding
Amid the thickest greenery,
Unknown to butterfly or bee.

When scarce a boy, by Olga captivated,
Heart pangs not knowing yet,
He'd been a tender witness
Of her infant amusements.
He, in the shade of a protected park,
Shared her amusements,
And for these children destined wedding crowns
Their fathers, who were friends and neighbors.
In the backwoods, beneath a humble roof,
Full of innocent charm,
Under the eyes of her parents, she
Bloomed like a hidden lily of the valley
Which is unknown in the dense grass
Either to butterflies or bee.

22.

From her he won the intimation
Of youthful pleasures yet to come;
She would provide the inspiration
That caused his virgin flute to hum.
What golden games! But they were ended;
In deepest woods, as dark descended,
He sought the stillness of the night,
The bilious moon's empyrean light.
To that pale lamp we dedicated
The strolls we took while others slept—
It shone on secret tears we wept
Until our pain had dissipated . . . .
But now the moon has lost her shine;
A bleary lantern suits us fine.

To the poet she awarded
The first dream of young transports,
And thought of her inspired
The first moan of his Panpipes.
Farewell, golden games!
He grew fond of thick groves,
Seclusion, stillness,
And night, and stars, and moon—
The moon, celestial lamp,
To which we dedicated
Walks midst the evening darkness,
And tears, of secret pangs the joyance . . .
But now we only see in her
A substitute for bleary lanterns.

23.

Obedient, demure, and beaming
As bright as morning skies above;
As childlike as a poet's dreaming,
As winsome as the kiss of love;
The azure eyes, the flaxen tresses,
The voice, the smile that luminesces,
The tiny waist, the graceful stance . . .
That's her. In every cheap romance
You'll find an Olga, or her cousin,
And it's a charming portrait, too—
I liked it back when it was new,
But now that type's a dime a dozen.
Still, if she doesn't fit the bill,
Perhaps her elder sister will.

Always modest, always obedient,
Always as merry as the morn,
As naïve as a poet's life,
As winsome as love's kiss,
Eyes, azure as the sky,
Smile, flaxen locks,
Movements, voice, light waist—
Everything in Olga . . . but any novel
Take, and you'll surely find
Her portrait; it is very winsome;
I liked it once myself,
But it has palled me beyond measure.
Let me, my reader,
Take up the elder sister.

24.

Tatiana was her name. We choose it
Quite whimsically, because we know
No other novelist would use it,
Or hasn't, up till now—although
Its sound is lovely, without question.
Perhaps it carries some suggestion
Of servants' quarters, days gone by;
It's fusty. Still, we can't deny
Our taste in names brings shame upon us;
I sometimes think there's nothing worse—
Except, of course, our taste in verse.
Enlightenment is wasted on us:
We use it as a pretext for
Pretentiousness, and nothing more.

Her sister was called Tatiana.
For the first time with such a name
The tender pages of a novel
We'll whimsically grace.
And why not? It is pleasing, sonorous,
But from it, I know, is inseparable
The memory of ancientry
Or housemaids' quarters. We must all
Admit that very little taste
We have even in our names
(To say nothing of verse);
Enlightenment does not suit us,
And what we have derived from it
Is affectation—nothing more.

25.

Tatiana, then, we'll designate her.
She lacked her sister's rosy hue,
The beauty that would separate her
From any other girl on view.
Somber and silent, elemental,
As skittish as a fawn, as gentle,
She often seemed a refugee
From quite another family.
She would not snuggle with her mother
Or father; that was not her way.
Nor did she care to skip and play,
Though but a child like any other;
She'd sit all day, alone and still,
And stare across the windowsill.

So she was called Tatiana.
Neither with her sister's beauty
Nor with the latter's rosy freshness
Would she attract one's eyes.
Sauvage, sad, silent,
As timid as the sylvan doe,
In her own family
She seemed a strangeling.
She was not apt to snuggle up
To her father or mother;
A child herself, among a crowd of children,
Wished not to play and skip,
And often all day long, alone,
Sat silent by the window.

26.

Her pensive nature was a blessing
From cradle days; the ebb and flow
Of rustic life can be depressing,
Without imagination's glow.
No needle touched her dainty finger;
Nor at the tambour did she linger,
Nor on the linen would you find
A silken pattern she'd designed.
We see the will to domination
In every little girl at play
Who's taught her doll the proper way
To meet a social obligation—
Repeating, in a voice quite stern,
Each lesson Mother made her learn . . .

Pensiveness, her companion,
Even from cradle days,
The course of rural leisure
With daydreams beautified for her.
Her delicate fingers
Knew needles not; inclined upon the tambour,
With a silk pattern she
Did not enliven linen.
Sign of the urge to domineer:
With her obedient doll, the child
Prepares in play
For etiquette, law of the *monde*,
And gravely to her doll repeats
Her mamma's lessons;

27.

. . . But Tanya didn’t play with dollies;
She had no one with whom to chat
About the townsfolk and their follies,
About the latest gown or hat.
And childish pranks were quite beyond her;
The girl was altogether fonder
Of gruesome tales told by the light
Of candles on a wintry night.
And any time the nurse imported
Some friends of Olga’s for a game
Of barleybrakes, she never came
Down to the meadow where they sported;
She was a stranger to the joys
Of giddy laughter, girlish noise.

But even in those years a doll
Tatiana took not in her hands;
About town news, about the fashions,
Did not converse with it;
And childish pranks
To her were foreign; [grisly] tales
In winter, in the dark of nights,
Captivated more her heart.
And when the nurse assembled
For Olga, on the spacious meadow,
All her small girl companions,
She did not play at barleybreaks,
Dull were to her both ringing laughter
And the noise of their giddy pleasures.

28.

Upon the balcony she'd station
Herself to watch Aurora's rise,
When every dancing constellation
Is blotted from the pallid skies,
And earth's horizon softly lightens,
And breezes sigh as heaven brightens
In portent of the risen day.
In wintertime, when night holds sway,
And half the world is in its keeping
For hours longer, and the glow
Of misty moonlight lingers so
The idle East can go on sleeping,
The girl awakened just the same,
And rose and dressed by candle-flame.

On the balcony she liked
To prevene Aurora's rise,
When on the pale sky
Disappears the choral dance of stars,
And earth's rim softly lightens,
And, morning's herald, the wind whiffs,
And rises by degrees the day.
In winter, when night's shade
Possesses longer half the world,
And longer in the idle stillness,
By the bemisted moon,
The lazy orient sleeps,
Awakened at her customary hour
She would get up by candles.

29.

The love of books, her first addiction,
Would trump all else; she seemed to show
A special fondness for the fiction
Of Richardson and of Rousseau.
Although his attitudes were dated,
Her kindly father tolerated
The volumes stacked upon her shelf;
He never read the things himself,
And thought them harmless recreation;
The novels that his daughter kept
Beneath the pillow where she slept
Required no investigation.
And like the girl, his wife agreed
That Richardson was grand indeed.

She early had been fond of novels;
For her they replaced all;
She grew enamored with the fictions
Of Richardson and of Rousseau.
Her father was a kindly fellow
Who lagged in the precedent age
But saw no harm in books;
He, never reading,
Deemed them an empty toy,
Nor did he care
What secret tome his daughter had
Dozing till morn under her pillow.
As to his wife, she was herself
Mad upon Richardson.

30.

It wasn't that she liked his writing—
Of which she'd scarcely read a word—
Nor that she found Lovelace exciting,
Nor that she Grandison preferred;
In Moscow long ago, her older
Cousin, Princess Alina, told her
At length about the characters—
So they were favorites of hers.
She was engaged, against her wishes,
To Larin then—but she was bent
For someone else, a dashing gent
Whose attributes were more auspicious.
Her Grandison was in the Guards,
An ensign who liked clothes and cards.

The reason she loved Richardson
Was not that she had read him,
And not that Grandison
To Lovelace she preferred,
But anciently, Princess Alina,
Her Moscow maiden cousin,
Would often talk to her about them.
At that time, still affianced was
Her husband, but against her will.
She sighed after another
Whose heart and mind
Were much more to her liking;

That Grandison was a great dandy,
A gamester, and an ensign in the Guards.

31.

Like him a guiding light of fashion,
She dressed in most becoming style;
Her parents, though, had no compassion:
They marched her roughly down the aisle.
The canny husband, sensing trouble,
Made for the country on the double
To mollify his grieving bride,
Who wept and wailed and testified
To anyone in shouting distance
That she would leave . . . but came around,
And with a house to manage, found
Contentment in her new existence.
Thus heaven's gift: when joy is gone,
Routine will help us carry on.

Like him, she was dressed always
According to the fashion and becomingly.
But without asking her advice
They took the maiden to the altar;
And to dispel her grief
The sensible husband drove off soon
To his countryseat, where she,
God knows by whom surrounded,
Tossed and wept at first,
Almost divorced her husband,
Then got engaged in household matters,
Became habituated, and content.
Habit to us is given from above.
It is a substitute for happiness.

32.

And habit was her consolation
When nothing else could ease her grief,
Until a sudden realization
Brought full and permanent relief.
Between the dawdle and the doing,
She learned a lesson worth reviewing:
A house has but a single head—
So she must rule the man she wed.
Soon all was good: she toured the farming
And pickled mushrooms, paid the bills,
Took weekly baths to cure her ills,
Shaved lazy workers for the army*,
And smacked her maids when she saw fit—
But kept her husband out of it.

Habit allayed the grief
That nothing else could ward;
A big discovery soon
Fully consoled her.
Between the dally and the do
A secret she discovered: how her spouse
To govern monocratically,
And forthwith everything went right.
She would drive out to tour the farming,
She pickled mushrooms for the winter,
She kept the books, "shaved foreheads,"
To the bathhouse would go on Saturdays,
Walloped her maids when angered—
All this without asking her husband's leave.

---

* —Serfs who had been selected for military service by their masters had their forelocks shaved for easy recognition. This footnote, it is hoped, will distract the reader from the off-rhyme it annotates, giving the translator a chance to come up with something better in a future draft.

33.

She'd sign the album of a crony
In her own blood, as girls prefer;
She sang her words to sound more tony;
Praskovya was "Pauline" to her.
She laced her corset far too tightly,
And said her Russian *N*'s too lightly,
In Gallic fashion, through the nose;
But soon enough she dropped her pose:
The corsets, and Princess Alina,
The notebooks full of mawkish rhyme,
All lost their luster, and in time
"Akulka" had replaced "Selina";
She traded in her fancy wraps
For dressing gowns and quilted caps.

Time was, she used to write in blood
In tender maidens' albums,
Would call Praskovia "Polina,"
And speak in singsong tones;
A very tight corset she wore,
And Russian *Nash* as a French *N*
She knew how to nasalize;
But soon all this ceased to exist;
Corset, albums, Princess [Alina],
Cahier of sentimental rhymes,
She forgot, started to call
"Akul'ka" the one-time "Selina,"
And finally inaugurated
The quilted chamber robe and mobcap.

34.

Her husband loved her absolutely,
And always let her have her mind;
She ran the household so astutely,
He wore his robe and drank and dined,
And that was all that life required.
Some nights, before they'd all retired,
A group of neighbors came to call—
Good-natured fellows, one and all;
They'd chat about what they'd been doing,
Trade gossip, tell a joke or three,
And soon enough they'd want some tea,
So Olga set a kettle brewing;
They'd stay for supper, then they'd head
Back down the road and home to bed.

But dearly did her husband love her,
Into her projects did not enter;
On every score, carefree, he trusted her
Whilst in his dressing gown he ate and drank.
His life rolled comfortably on;
At evenfall sometimes assembled
A kindly group of neighbors,
Unceremonious friends,
To rue, to tattle,
To chuckle over this or that.
Time passes; meanwhile
Olga they'd tell to get tea ready;
Then supper comes, then, lo, ‘tis bedtime,
And the guests drive away.

35.

They spent their peaceful lives observing
The customs that we venerate;
At Shrovetide you would find a serving
Of *blini* piled upon your plate.
They fasted for their sins twice yearly,
And loved a carousel quite dearly—
And crystal balls, and choral dance.
At Trinity, half in a trance,
They'd hear a sermon on thanksgiving;
Then on their lovage, they'd prepare
To shed three tears. And like fresh air,
They needed *kvas* to go on living;
Their table service was designed
With rank and privilege in mind.

They in their peaceful life preserved
The customs of dear ancientry:
With them, during fat Butterweek
Russian pancakes were wont to be.

[*They fasted twice a year;*
Loved whirligigs,
Dish-divination songs, the choral dance.
On Trinity Day, when the people,
Yawning, attended the Thanksgiving service,
Upon a bunch of giltcups touchingly
They shed two or three tearlets.]

Kvas was as requisite to them as air,
And at their table to the guests
By rank the dishes were presented.

(Italicized lines are taken from the fair draft. They were omitted from all editions of the poem published in Pushkin's lifetime.)

36.

So they grew old, as do all mortals,
And Larin's days soon dwindled down;
And when the grave threw wide its portals,
He donned a second, final crown.
His death arrived before his dinner;
The passing of this humble sinner
Left children, wife, and friends forlorn—
More deeply so than some who mourn.
He was a simple, kindly *barin,*
And where his ashes had been laid
A granite monument displayed
This epitaph: *Dmitri Larin,*
God's servant, and a Brigadier,
Has found the peace he wanted here.

And thus they both declined
And opened finally
Before the husband the grave's portals,
And a new crown upon him was bestowed.
He died at the preprandial hour,
Bewailed by neighbor,
Children, and faithful wife,
More candidly than some.
He was a simple and kind squire,
And there where lies his dust
The monument above the grave proclaims:
"The humble sinner Dmitri Larin,
Slave of our Lord, and Brigadier,
Beneath this stone enjoyeth peace."

37.

To his penates reinstated,
Vladimir Lensky drove to see
That humble grave, and dedicated
A sigh to Larin's memory.
For quite a while he stood there staring.
"Poor Yorick," he announced, despairing,
"He'd carry me about all day,
And sometimes even let me play
With his Ochakov decoration!
He always hoped before he died
To see his Olga as my bride . . . ."
Then, overcome with desolation,
Young Lensky wrote upon the spot
A madrigal to mark the plot.

To his penates restored,
Vladimir Lenski visited
His neighbor's humble monument,
And dedicated a sigh to his dust,
And long his heart was doleful.
"Poor Yorick!" mournfully he uttered,
"In his arms he hath borne me.
How oft I played in childhood
With his Ochakov medal!
For me he destined Olga;
He said, 'Shall I be there to see the day?'"
And full of sincere sadness,
Vladimir then and there set down
A gravestone madrigal for him.

38.

And then, in tears, he wrote another
Sweet epitaph, and left this gift
Atop his father and his mother.
Life's harvest is, alas, too swift:
Upon the soil each generation
In Providence's crop rotation
Takes root, and bears its fruit, and dies,
And where it stood new crops arise,
And life goes on, though life is futile:
We hustle, bustle, fuss and fume;
We push our elders toward the tomb,
And our fate will be no less brutal.
So who are we to grumble if
Our grandkids nudge us off the cliff?

And there, too, with a sad inscription,
In tears, his father's and mother's
Patriarchal dust he honored.
Alas! Upon life's furrows,
In a brief harvest, generations
By Providence's secrets will
Rise, ripen, and must fall;
Others come in their wake . . . .
Thus our frivolous race
Waxes, is in commotion, seethes,
And tombward crowds its ancestors.
Our time likewise will come, will come,
And one fine day our grandsons
Out of the world will crowd us too.

39.

Our glass is brimming with potential—
For now. So guzzle every drop;
Life is at best inconsequential—
Don't get attached. It's going to stop.
I've turned my gaze from old chimeras,
But distant hopes still reappear as
The light grows dim. How can I go
Into the darkness, if I know
That all I've done is transitory?
I do not seek the world's esteem
In life or art, but to redeem
My lot, I need some scrap of glory—
One perfect note that lingers on
And speaks my name when I am gone.

In the meanwhile, imbibe your fill of it—
Of this light life, friends!
Its insignificance I realize
And little am attached to it;
To phantoms I have closed my eyelids;
But distant hopes
Sometimes disturb my heart;
Without an imperceptible trace
To leave the world I would be sad.
I live, I write not for the sake of praise
But I'd have liked, meseems,
To glorify my woeful lot,
So that, like a true friend, remindful
Of me would be, at least, one sound.

40.

If someone reading this should cherish
My song, then kindly fate may keep
These stanzas safe—for else they perish
In Lethe's currents dark and deep.
A flattering hope!—to be so famous
That decades hence some ignoramus
Might see my portrait and exclaim,
"Now *there's* a poet worth the name!"
I thank you, friend; if you admire
The gentle Muses, may you thrive:
Your memory will keep alive
The fleeting products of my lyre;
Your hand will pat the laurel bough
That decorates an old man's brow.

And somebody's heart it will move;
And kept by fate,
Perhaps in Lethe will not drown
The strophe I compose;
Perhaps—flattering hope!—
A future dunce will point
At my famed portrait
And utter: "*That* now was a poet!"
So do accept my thanks,
Admirer of the mild Aonian maids,
O you whose memory will preserve
My fugitive creations,
Whose benevolent hand
Will pat the old man's laurels!

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF
THE CLUB: 14 MAY 2012

WILL TAKE PLACE AT
SPRUCE
3640 SACRAMENTO STREET
SAN FRANCISCO

6:00 PM

HOST: PHILIP BOWLES
PAPER: SAM HAMM

R.S.V.P:
(415) 421-4800
(415) 362-0904 (FAX)
PEB@BFARM.COM
COMPLIMENTARY VALET PARKING

Sam Hamm
makes bold to request
the honor of your presence
at the regular monthly meeting of

the club

to be held on the evening of
March 12, 2012
at:

Farina
3560 18th Street
(between Valencia and Guerrero)

A selection of palate-moisteners
will be served at 6 PM.
Dinner will follow at 7,
after which distinguished member
Lawrence Jordan
will favor us with his latest paper
on the Theory and Practice of the Hoochie-Koo
(or another subject of equal or greater interest).

Kindly RSVP to your host
by email at shamm@well.com
or by telephone at 415-465-2657
on or before March 7

- March
- **August** **(a fragment)**
- NOVEMBER

Philip Bowles
4/9/2012
the club

March

The Saw Mill River Parkway looked greasy that morning, wet from a morning rain. Early spring sunlight was making it steam, and the trees, with just fingernail green leaves beginning to poke out of their branches, reflected like black iron against the silver roadway. Lower there were wiggly black bushes like bobby-pins, or the tree in Grandfather's garden called a Hairy Logger's Walking Stick. Mother guided the big Buick along silently. They didn't talk much, and Hiram was in a sulky mood anyway. School was out for Holy Week, but it was too cold outside to play, and some of his friends had taken the train to Florida with their parents. He felt bundled and itchy. The Buick had a heater, but Mother insisted the heat "ruined" her hairdo, and said he must wear his coat to stay warm.

It was the cap that made the camel's hair overcoat so intolerable. Mother had told him to wear the "ohn-somblah" as she called it; the cap was too small for Hiram's large head, a man-sized head on an eleven year old boy. It was tight and uncomfortable, and he hated it because he thought it made him look like an organ grinder's monkey. He stared out the window and daydreamed about the woods. They weren't really woods, of course, since gas stations and houses were right behind them, but they looked like woods. He always enjoyed the stone overpasses, each one different.

He wanted Father to take him camping in the woods, the real woods in Maine or the Adirondacks. Many of his classmates had fathers who had served overseas, and they went hunting, or fishing, or camping together. Hiram imagined these fathers had learned all sorts of woodcraft in the Army, and could make fires from sticks, tents from old tarpaulins. Father had not served in the Army. He had a deferment as an engineer for the Radio Corporation, designing electronic tubes. Sometimes he had had to spend a week, or even two weeks away on business. After the War, when Hiram was still very young, a man in a big black Packard and a driver came to the house, and presented Father with a medal in front of the whole family. Father had said the man was a Colonel, although he did not wear a uniform. He explained he was given the medal because during the times he was away from home, he had been at a place

called Tuxedo Park, where he and some other engineers worked on a special radio for President Roosevelt. It was supposed to be a gift for Mrs. Roosevelt, so it was a secret, and then the President died; but how the radio worked was still a secret. Father said it was probably out all of date by now. Father never wore the medal after that, but kept it in a small frame next to his Tau Beta Pi key. He never called himself "Doctor" either, even though one of his diplomas said he could.

Tuxedo Park! Hiram had imagined an elegant place with ladies in long dresses, dancing with the men in tuxedos, drinking champagne and making secret radios for the President. The other boys in his class told stories of how their Dads had machine gunned Japs and bayonetted Jerries, shot down fighter aircraft, fought heroic battles in tanks and destroyers and PT boats. Hiram had to say his father just made radios, but he did have a medal. Of course, there were also some boys, like Peter Mangalore, who had a father who was never coming home from Okinawa, or ones like Chester Zeichnet who had a crippled one who was drunk all the time, and yelled at him.

Father was no war hero, and he always had another excuse about why they could not go camping, but he certainly was a lot of fun! Sometimes out of the blue he would invent a character, and begin to act like a Russian Count, or a Southern Colonel. Last night at dinner, as Lydia, the dark round maid who came from Poland, served the roast beef, he started in: "Claudette" (for that was his older sister's name) "it is time you were presented properly to a young man with prospects." Since she was only sixteen, this seemed a little premature. "You must think of aligning your interests to a family with capital, because the depredations of General Sherman have left your father in severely reduced circumstances. The Negroes have all scampered away, and the scalliwags took with them most of the stock. I shall have to mortgage Halcyon, and your mother shall be reduced to taking in mending. Oh, that I had perished nobly on the field with Cunnel Falkner! What air more noble than to lie on the field of battle with your car case filled with canyon balls... " He and mother had been talking about the income tax, and somehow that had inspired his impromptu monologue. Hiram and Claudette thought it

was funny, but mother seemed slightly irritated. She seemed irritated at most things Father did these days.

East River Drive was full of noise and construction, but it was fun to watch the college boys rowing their dark needle like sculls far below. Soon enough, though, they were turning off near the new United Nations building. The Weekly Reader had said that President Eisenhower had delivered an important speech there just before Christmas, promising that the power of the atomic bomb could be used for all sorts of wonderful things, not just for blowing up the Japs. Drawing mushroom clouds, particularly during boring classes, was one of Hiram's particular skills. Father had tried to talk to him last night, saying that the teachers were complaining about his daydreaming in class, and that he needed to pay more attention. But Father could never be very stern, and half the time he was so silly Hiram never knew whether he was being serious or not.

He was slammed against the dashboard as mother jammed on the brakes. A man who must have been from one of the United Nations countries, and who was dressed for all the world like one of the Three Kings in the Christmas pageant, was screaming something at her in what must have been his native language. Hiram imagined the sounds as squiggly letters like the ones his friend Ricky had shown him in the Maxwell House Haggadah. Ricky was starting to study for bar Mitzvah classes. Passover sounded like another Thanksgiving or Christmas, with lots of food and family stories, whereas Easter was a long church service, then an afternoon at Grandfather's house all the way up in Greenwich. Grandfather lived in what seemed to Hiram a vast castle, with servants everywhere. Mother had grown up in that house, and her bedroom still had the collection of model horses and the neat rows of riding ribbons she had won. Aunt Helen and her husband Waring were always there, with their three bullying and dull children. Uncle Waring had been a naval officer, and was now in the banking business, and owned a Cadillac. When he talked he made a braying noise but never seemed to open his mouth; somehow he managed to spit on you at the same time. They had taken a European vacation last year, and made everyone sit through a color photographic slide show, taken with the fancy Leica camera Uncle Waring loved to talk about. Like the blender, he just went on and on,

making noises. Hiram could only imagine what boring, bragging thing the family would babble about this time. Father liked to tell sly jokes about them, and sometimes he'd mention the legs on Miss Clark, Grandfather's secretary. She had moved in to help him with things after Grandmother died. Grandmother had been an invalid for a long time, and smelled on the few times Hiram had seen her. Father and Mother would have a big fight whenever Father joked about her family, if it went on very long.

His other grandfather lived on a little farm on the other side of the river, near Roscoe. Nobody ever spoke about whoever his wife had been, and Father was vague whenever Hiram asked him, which was not often since it seemed to make him uncomfortable. Hiram would sometimes look at pictures of kindly old grandmothers knitting, or making pies, and wished he had one. Paw's (for that is what he wanted to be called, a name like a part of an animal) farmhouse was dirty, and he and Claudette had to sleep on couches in the living room. It was novel to milk a cow, once: but the little prickly hairs on the cow's udder felt scratchy on his hands, the cow was huge enough to crush him, and it smelled bad. Drinking the warm milk was disgusting. There was a pond with fish to catch, and that was fun, though. Paw tried to do a few things with Hiram, but he had bad breath, and really did not seem to know about much other than the farm. He had a teacher friend about a half hour away, who built wonderful train sets. It was always interesting to go there; but other than that Paw never seemed to have any time for fun. It was as though he never knew what fun was. Mother never liked to take the family to see him, and Father didn't much either, for all that. Paw could never come and visit them because of the animals. Nobody seemed to mind keeping things just as they were. It always made Hiram sad when they left the farm, though, because Paw's eyes looked so old then. The same strange far away eyes like Father had, when he looked like he was sad, yet was making jokes and talking to himself.

Mother had been fixing her lipstick in the rear view mirror, and must have nearly hit the man. She gave a cheery wave, and drove on, as the little notes of the exotic invective faded away, like the ashes from newspaper when it burns out of doors. Hiram noticed that on the whole trip down from Bronxville she had been fussing with her hair, or looking at her face in the mirror instead of at the road, or at him.

She pulled to the curb in front of Rockefeller Center. Mother was going for one of her bridge lessons at the St. Regis, and Hiram was to wait for her at the ice rink. He had met the bridge teacher, Monsieur Lampre, just once, briefly. He was a slender man with a pencil moustache who smelled of Wildroot Cream Oil and cigarettes. He dressed the way college boys did, which seemed strange for a man who was clearly a grownup. Hiram noticed that his fingernails were shiny, as though they had been waxed. Perhaps in cards it was important to keep your fingers immaculate. The time they met, the three of them had eaten lunch together at the Plaza. The teacher seemed to have no interests outside of bridge, a game Hiram found incomprehensible. He barely spoke to him, chain-smoked, and kept darting his head around nervously. Mother said he was an extremely cultivated émigré who had been forced to flee the Nazis in France "without a sou" as she liked to say. He had made his way in life by wits alone, as a teacher and tournament player, which seemed admirable enough, if it were true. Hiram had read newspaper articles about all kinds of phony counts and other Europeans with tall tales who showed up after the War. Hiram couldn't imagine what any Nazi would want with the man, and felt they were well rid of him.

The ice rink was always fun, and he could get a soda in the café there, and watch all the people. There were so many foreigners! Mother drove off before Hiram realized she had forgotten to give him any money to rent skates, or even to buy a soda, for that matter. She had seemed in such a hurry, and so distracted. Why did she have to drive all the way into the city to play bridge, when there were plenty of ladies in Westchester who played every day?

He stuffed the wretched cap into his coat pocket, and walked down Fifth Avenue toward the Library. That was free, and a pleasant place to spend a couple of hours. In the Periodical Reading Room, he settled down in front of the latest big green Index of Periodicals, that marvelous compilation that must have been assembled by robots, or geniuses, or maybe prisoners. Who had the time to put this together every year? Hiram loved to leaf through it, just to see who was writing about what. Thomas Edison had eleven new entries, the atomic bomb several pages, hot-air balloons only three articles. He took a slip and wrote down the index

numbers for a couple of interesting articles, one on the Belgian Congo and one on clipper ships. The librarians were always so nice to him!

Standing in line, he felt a jostle from behind. It was an older boy, perhaps fourteen, with gingery hair and pimples. He smiled, and seemed friendly enough, but Hiram did not want to socialize, he wanted to get his articles. Besides, it was a library, and talking was supposed to be kept to a minimum. Yet the older boy was incessant, asking dumb questions, commenting on sports and comic books, which he was not allowed to read. Father had said they caused juvenile delinquency. He read them at his friends' houses anyway, and found them childish, stupid. Some even appeared to be written for grownups, since they contained war stories and primitive, gory drawings. The gingery boy stood uncomfortably close to him. "Well, what *are* you interested in then? Geez, I know, how'd you like to look at pitchers of titties? National Geographic is full of 'em, and there's a ton of copies here. They're all darkies, of course, but pretty nice all the same." Hiram said he had already chosen a few magazines to read, and could he please be left alone. "What are you, some kinda fairy or somethin'?" the older pest said. Hiram had heard Mother ask Father if he were a "fairy" when they had had a loud blow up a few months ago, and he had some idea of what the term meant. There were men, he heard, who liked to dance with one another, and who liked help people to arrange furniture and flowers. None of those things seemed all that awful to Hiram, and he had liked it when Mister Richard—that is what he called himself, Mister Richard—who wore an Ascot tie, and kept his left ring finger nail trimmed very long--came to the house one time. He ordered all the furniture recovered, and new curtains made, a Christmas gift from Grandfather. The living room looked so gay afterwards, and his bedroom had received a blue-and-white vaguely naval makeover, which pleased him. He had heard mother refer to Mister Richard dismissively as a "fairy" when she talked to one of her friends on the telephone, but she seemed eager enough to impress him when he was in the house, making tea for him, talking in a movie-star kind of voice. He rarely heard her use that, except on the few occasions when important people like the Colonel or the fat lady from the Junior League stopped by. Here might be a way to get rid of the exasperating fellow. Hiram tried to look as serious as possible. "Yes" he said "yes, I am. And so is my father,

and so is my older brother waiting downstairs. All three of us will take you off to the fairy nest in Greenwich Village where we go dancing if you don't leave me alone." He had heard about fairy nests when Paw let had him listen to Dragnet on the radio. The older boy's eyes widened as he stepped away. "I'm going to tell on you! I'm going to tell the guard what you said!" And he went away. It occurred to Hiram that the idiot might actually convince some adult that he had done or said something terrible, and they would make trouble for him. Sadly he put the request slip in his pocket for another time, and decided to head back up Fifth Avenue towards the skating rink.

It was already a little past two anyway. He could watch the skaters until Mother came to pick him up. There were kids, and some adults, gliding around with various degrees of grace. In the center was a young couple in fancy clothes figure skating. The girl was very pretty, but the boy had terrible pockmarks, and lots of greasy tonic on his hair. They seemed very well practiced, but, Hiram thought, a little show-offy. Why were they there? Had they been hired as entertainers? Were they trying to get discovered by one of the radio executives for a new television show? Figure skating was one of these sports the radio never covered, obviously. Maybe they were on to something. He guessed his cousins would have a television set by now, and—that was it!—they would bore him at Easter with their bragging about it. Father had said they would get one, "one of these days", but that they would soon become much less expensive and much better.

Four skaters in adult sized animal costumes emerged from the gate on the north side of the rink. A squirrel, a yellow baby chick, something pink (a pig?), and a rabbit. Doubtless they were practicing for some Easter related event. The rabbit looked unsteady. In the middle of a Ring-Around-the-Rosy he wandered away from the others and put his arms around the pretty girl figure-skater. She did not enjoy the attention. They collapsed onto the ice. The pock-marked boy pulled her away, and the rabbit got back on his feet, then took a half-hearted, cartoonish swing at the boy, but missed, and fell down again. This was getting to be pretty good! The three other animals took the rabbit, one on each arm and the other behind him, and escorted him off the ice, and to the end of the bench where Hiram was sitting. He could not hear most of what

they were saying, but they seemed cross, and told the rabbit to stay right where he was, or the cops would come. Then they went back on the ice, and did some artless Conga-line routines.

"Howdya do?" said the rabbit. "I'm Mr. Hip-pitty Hop. Who are you?" He slid about halfway toward Hiram. A hiccup, and the smell of whiskey. Hiram had been told hundreds of times not to talk to strangers, but a man in a rabbit costume, wearing ice skates, did not strike him as very dangerous. Besides, he did not want to move from his seat, which was in the sun. "I think I better eat something" said the rabbit after a few minutes. "How about a hoddddog, Whachername?" That was the way he said it, "hoddddog". Hiram was starving, and a hot dog sounded delicious. "My name is Hiram, and yes, please, I would enjoy a hot dog."

"How about you go get 'em, since I'm not supposed to move, and I'm wearing these skates." The rabbit seemed to think this was very funny. He handed Hiram two fifty cent pieces, and told him to get two sodas, too. How would the rabbit eat a hot dog? He could just barely see his face behind a little screen, like the screen in front of Father Crimmins in the confessional. Father Crimmins had given a sermon on a passage in Mark the last time he went to church with his parents, which was not all that often. Grandfather seemed to think church was very important, so they went. In the reading, Jesus had cast out demons from sick people all day long. Hiram wondered why the story said he just cast them out, where they might just jump into someone else, instead of Jesus just killing the demons right then and there. Maybe demons were like snails, who would just die if left out in the sun. Father Crimmins was not the sort of man you could ask about such things, and Hiram did not really care what the answer was, because it could never be proven.

He started to get up. "An nowlemme tell you something important son. Before you go away." The rabbit sounded like he might sniffling, or about to throw up. "Don't never get married. Just shack up, that's the thing. Don't never get married, ever." Shack up. What did *that* mean?

When he returned with the hot dogs and sodas, the rabbit was snoring. Hiram decided to leave him alone. When it became obvious that the rabbit's hot dog was just going to get cold before he woke up, Hiram ate that one, too, and placed the second soda and the two dimes in change

beside it on the bench. He decided to move back up to the street level, in case the rabbit woke up and thought he had been robbed. The soda was evidence Hiram had done what he'd been asked to do.

Mother was a little late picking him up. Her lipstick seemed to have a different shape; or had she changed the shade? Hiram had always loved her dressing table, with the smells and colors and tight lipped tins of powdery colors. The lipstick tubes would twist out of their tinny Chap-Stick silos, looking like a dog's boner, and each one had a different smell and color. Puffy perfume bottles with glittery bulbs, scratchy when they ought to have been as soft as earlobes, and smells that always seemed much too strong when he puffed them out. This time, she managed to get across town without attempting to murder any of the Three Kings, and she even turned on the heater in the car.

At home, there was a Special Delivery letter for Father. Assembling Father's mail, putting the magazines, bills, and correspondence in separate piles was one of Hiram's favorite responsibilities. He remembered Father explaining why one sort of mail was more urgent than another. Hiram had learned to separate the less important, by reference to the return address or the style of the envelope. A Special Delivery letter, with the stamp's fine engraving and carefully composed frame, was worthy of its own pile. The flat, muddy images on the regular offset printed postage stamps next to it looked even worse than normal in comparison. What could this letter be?

That evening, as dinner was ending, Father explained. The letter was about taking a job in California, one that interested him. "RCA" he said, "just want to make more radios. They even insist on fighting poor old Professor Armstrong and his clearly superior wide-band frequency modulation..." Mother gave him one of her patented eye-rolls, and Claudette looked at her plate. "There are just so many more things to do with vacuum tubes! Did I ever tell you about my classmate at Columbia, Rex? We kept in touch with each other during the War, when he was out in New Mexico. Rex sent me that letter because he's working with a fellow, Charlie Litton, out in Los Angeles. They're hiring men to design all sorts of things people never dreamed were possible. Rex said I'd be a great fit in their engineering department. He's a great

guy, too, with a real honey of a wife; I remember her from graduate school. They'd introduce us to their set first thing. I wish I could tell you some of the things he came up with during the War. You know how a magnetron can be operated at a certain frequency which..."

"You are boring the children."

Which was not true, because even when he did not understand what Father was talking about, Hiram could sense the excitement in his voice when something caught him, and made him come alive. Then he could glimpse the man who won a medal, instead of the one who just told silly jokes behind sad eyes, and was kind and dreamy. He wished he could show his friends that first father.

"He can't afford to pay me as much as RCA does right now, but he's offered me stock..."

Mother looked down and said "Stock. Paper. We are barely getting by right now. Why, without Daddy's help..."

"We could sell this place and get a palace out there, with a big garden, maybe even a swimming pool. No heating oil to buy, the electricity comes from hydro-electric plants, and pretty soon nuclear ones, the public schools are free, and darned good, I hear..."

Mother cut him off "Daddy would never permit the children to leave St. Gregory's, or to go to any public school."

There was silence, the common silence that cut most family dinners apart. Hiram and Claudette looked at one another, puzzled by this surprise development. Los Angeles. Mother had always said Los Angeles was "vulgar" (one of her favorite words for anything Hiram thought sounded fun), and "full of Jews". He liked his friend Ricky and the other Jewish boys he had met in Little League and at the Library. They were different from his classmates, the way he felt he was. Not the same way different, but different, the way Father was different from the other boys' fathers. A couple of them had older sisters with huge boobs, too.

Mother took a deep breath, then seemed to brighten. “Well, maybe you should go out there and take a look, dear. Get it out of your system.”

“I’ll have to use up some of my vacation time.”

“It doesn’t matter”, her voice a little tighter. “We could only afford to go visit your father, anyway. Just go, and see how you like this Litton fellow.” She rang for Lydia to clear.

That night, Hiram lay in bed after reading, and listened in the dark to a new set of thunderstorms rolling up the Hudson River Valley. At 9:32 he could hear a train whistle in the distance, but only a whine from the engine. She ran electric up to Croton. The 20th Century Limited, bound for Chicago out of Grand Central; but she was late, six minutes late. The Empire State Express would be by in the morning, but it no longer had the old steam engine, with its softer note. He knew all the train schedules by heart. Couldn’t help himself, he just did, and his family never took the train anywhere, except maybe to the City sometimes. *That* train was just a trolley-car anyway; the 20th Century was all Pullmans, elegant, the best of everything. People were going places, he thought, millions of people all going millions of places, more and more of them. Each one had a reason for their journey, and each had stories, everything from a courier with a case of legal documents, to a murderer making his getaway.

He was glad he was snug in his blue and white room with the rope anchor on his headboard. He was too old to sleep with the old stuffed tiger looking at him from the bookshelf, but he always said goodnight to it anyway. Father was just being silly about Los Angeles. Tomorrow he would ask him what it was about the magnetrons, and show him the slip with articles he had found in the Library, and ask about what “shacking up” meant. Maybe *it* was vulgar, too!

August

He could smell their sins before he saw the men . Watching from the shadows of the rimrock, Adam could see the riders below, trailing snakes of dust, the sun on their faces so bright they pulled their hats down as far as they could. There was no way they might see him. Sin, stronger than any sun, had made them blind. He had expected that, although he also expected his first round would strike the leader in his sixth thoracic vertebra, instead of seven bones lower and one inch too far right. Still, with his upper lumbar stunned or fractured, the man cleared the saddle, flapping his arms comically, like some drunken bird. The other rider, the one who was burdened by the travois, and therefore could be made to wait, stared upward, turned, startled, then more startled as the 44-70 took him just above the sternum, where it was supposed to. He geysered a pink cloud, and Adam knew he was making the terrified whistle such men make, but he could not hear it.

Now, there was work to do. He scrambled through the sage and runty cactus. The first rider still hung from one stirrup, breathing. Adam felt him for weapons, hobbled the nervous horse, and cut the man's gun belt away. In the travois, the smell of her sex was everywhere. Mary, beneath buffalo hides and the stinking blankets of the savages. He kissed her eyes, her ears, her hair, her mouth. Nearly toothless now, almost unfeeling. Laudanum, of course, they fed her on laudanum. Her debasement was the product of the sins of the others. They had et the fruits of the abominations they had set her to, and must needs grow ill on it. Sin was with the miner Nickel, and the drunkards and savages to whom these men had bartered her. Adam would now see that both of them were sanctified and cleansed, in the undiscovered and redeeming Zion to the West.

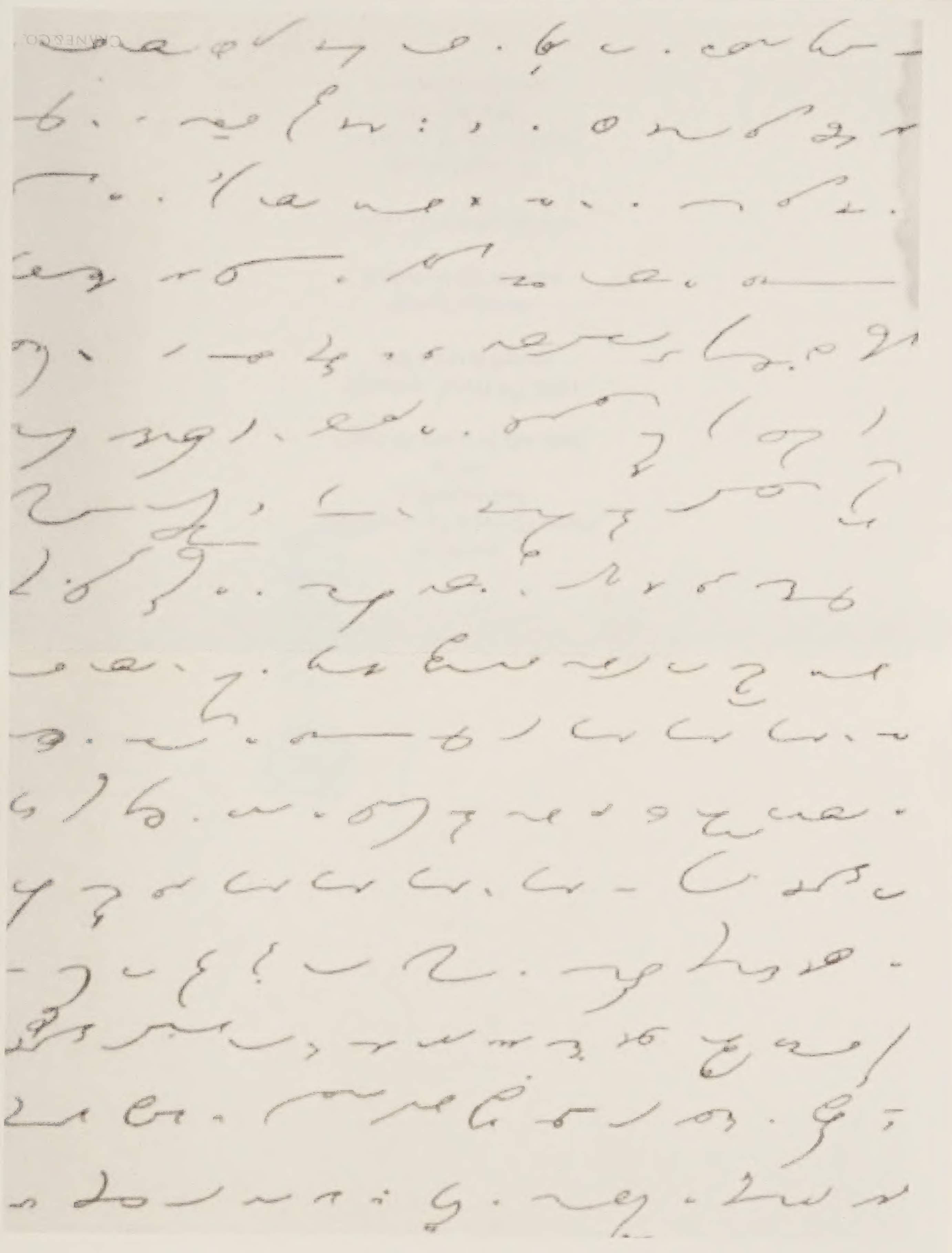
The first rider made a noise. "Jesus, mister, cut me down. I can't move my legs." From his inverted world, the man had watched him with Mary, but Adam stood behind him now and would not see his face. The exit wound stared up at him like a mouth waiting to receive the Host. "Hell, all you had to do was ask and you could of had her, or even took her. She weren't worth much to us no more anyway. Why'd you have to go and do this? She someone to you, mister?"

Adam peered into the wound, which widened and narrowed with the man's breath, as though it were trying to say something. He had made a lucky miss. No major artery or nerve bundle appeared to have been involved, and the man might even live, with luck and immediate attention. The ruptured iliac fascia exposed the external iliac artery, which lay pulsing, exposed to the light like a distended worm. Adam remembered fishing at the beaver pond with Mary when they were little, hooking the worms for her. He pricked it gently with his knife tip, standing clear of the weakening spray.

"Just someone I used to know."

November

Advent
We always miss it.
Did you see it coming?
Tumbling, the night air whispering you through the darkness.
Did it whistle like the artillery shell that buried you that first time in
A land of coconuts and sandy sun, recast at last as sandy cold?
Your geologist brain, did it see the ancient Franciscan
Serpentines and gneisses sail past fast, crumbling,
Treacherous fractured stuff
Perhaps the oldest rocks on earth
Ground down to shattered dandruff in the Holocene.
It, too, was steady once: strong, and pure.
Did you wonder or expect anything from the dark,
Grab at the air, grope for things to touch?
Howl any song or psalm?
And when you hit was it just dark, or did it hurt, even for an instant?
Could you laugh at all?
Did you wish you could go back, way back long before everything went wrong, or
Had you already pulled the hood
The executioner's hood you set so tight to make you sleep that
This one seemed like just another fall among the others?
Did you see it coming?
We always miss it.
Advent.



In Short,
the Honor of Your Presence
Is Requested
at the
Next Meeting of the club

Monday, April 9th, 2012
200 Laurel Street

6pm Cocktails
Followed By Dinner

Paper by Philip Bowles

Please Reply To
Member Wesley Moore
415-606-4465
wezmo@aol.com

6pm Cocktails
Followed By Dinner

Paper by Philip Bowles

Please Reply To
Member Wesley Moore
415-606-4465
wezmo@aol.com

The February Meeting of

the club

will be held at the
home of Charles Hobson
3069 Washington (near Baker)

Monday Evening,
February 13, 2012
Cocktails at 6 pm
Dinner at 7 pm
Paper: Nion McEvoy

Please advise the host about your attendance by
February 3, 2012
415-929-1230 or email: cmhobson@aol.com

Thank you!

Charles Hobson,
Father & Son Fishing, 2011

Monotype with pastel
www.charleshobson.com

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6pm Cocktails
Followed By Dinner

Paper by Philip Bowles

Please Reply To
Member Wesley Moore
415-606-4465
wezmo@aol.com

JAMES L. BENNINGTON, M.D.

11/14/12

Brewster,

Sorry you couldn't be with us. You missed a fantastic dinner and great wines.

Regards,
Jim

WRITINGS OF THE AMERICAN WEST: THE DIME NOVEL TO DOIG IN JUST TWO HUNDRED YEARS

James L. Bennington, MD

Introduction

For several months I toyed with the idea of a paper on the influence of American Western writing on the larger field of American literature, a subject that several concerned and knowledgeable friends assured me was better suited to a sizeable book than a forty-minute paper. Unfortunately good advice is often ignored. In my case, I soon found myself immersed and overwhelmed with reviews, anthologies, biographies, and spreadsheets on authors and publication data, with no certainty on how I was going to condense, organize, structure and meaningfully synthesize it all into something cogent.

Well into my search for a manageable approach, I came across an interesting article, *Can Geography Explain History?* [1], by Adam Gopnik, who begins his review of how geography explains history with the following. *"The first history . . . is a history of races. "Our tribe's myth is here, yours is over there, our race is called "the people" and blessed by god, and yours, well not so blessed. Next comes the history of faces: history as the epic acts of bosses and chiefs . . . Then comes the history of places, where the ingathering of people and classes in a single city or state makes a historical whole . . . Modern history is mostly place history . . . But beyond or beneath these histories is the history of spaces, a history where plains and rivers and harbors shape the social place".*

Gopnik's cryptic outline suggested to me a possible structure for tackling the subject in an interesting, but controllable way by looking at how the history of a literature is influenced by its geography, especially the relatively short and unique literary history of the American West.

The First 100 Years or So (1800 to Early 1900's)

If one includes the published journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition (1807), then the history of American Western "writings" by authors with first-hand knowledge of the area of interest dates back roughly 200 years. In this paper I have used the term writings, generically for all published narrative works of prose, reserving the designation of "literature" for those works that most thoughtful readers, especially knowledgeable critics, would designate as having superior or lasting artistic merit.

1. Gopnik, Adam: *Can Geography Explain History?*, New Yorker, October 29-November 5, 2012, 108-116

The first one hundred years of Western writings corresponds to the opening of the West, a time when few writers were familiar with the area, very little that was written about the West was authentic, and not much of what was written fell into the category of literature.

The Paucity of Early Western American Literature

There are very few American Western writings from the early 19th century that can be regarded as worthy literature. My choices would be James Fennimore Cooper's five novels comprising the *Leather Stocking Tales -- The Pioneers (1823), The Last of the Mohicans (1826), The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841); Washington Irving's *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), *Astoria* (1836) and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (1837); Balduin Möllhausen's *Traveling in the Rocky Mountains of North America up to the High Plateau of New Mexico* (1861), and *The Halfbreeds* (1861); Thomas Mayne Reid's, *The Rifle Rangers* (1850), and *The Hunter's Feast; or, Conversations Around the Campfire* (1856); Bret Harte's *The Luck of Roaring Camp* (1868) and *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* (1869); Owen Wister's *Hank's Woman* (1892) and *The Virginian* (1902); Mark Twain's *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* (186) and *Roughing It* (1872); and John G. Neighardt's *The Last Thunder Song* (1904).

The Few Authors Who Sought Authenticity in Writing about the Early American West

Only a handful of authors of the nineteenth century made any effort to learn about the American West first-hand. Those listed among the above who did were the exception. They were the conscientious few who made the effort leave the comforts of civilization in order to learn about the untamed and largely unexplored American frontier in order to write knowledgeably about it.

Balduin Möllhausen, a young German adventurer eager to see the American West joined a party of explorers heading for the Rocky Mountains In 1851, where he was wounded by Indians. His returned to civilization by canoeing down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. After returning to Berlin, he met Alexander von Humboldt who encouraged him to continue his explorations and arranged his appointment as a topographer and draughtsman for a rigorous two year scientific expedition to the far west of the United States.

Bret Harte, an Easterner, moved to California as a young man in 1853 where he worked as a journalist for several years in the coastal town of Union (now Arcata) on Humboldt Bay. After reporting and condemning the unprovoked massacre of between 80 and 200 helpless Wiyot Indians in 1860, he was forced to flee to San Francisco after receiving death threats.

Owen Wister, an American writer considered to be the "father" of Western fiction, made many trips as a young man to the West, beginning in 1855, to gather information on the culture, lore and especially the terrain of the region as inspiration for his writing. In Wyoming he met Teddy Roosevelt and the Western artist, Frederic Remington, who became a life-long friend.

Mark Twain, after his years as a Mississippi riverboat pilot, headed west to try his hand at gold mining, at which he failed miserably, so turned to journalism. He spent several years as a writer for the Virginia City, Nevada newspaper, the *Territorial Enterprise.* While there he wrote his humorous short story, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, which was published in 1865 bringing him national attention and a

commission to sail to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) as a reporter for the *Sacramento Union*.

John G. Neighardt exploring the West made the arduous journey down the untamed Missouri River in 1908 by open boat from Fort Benton, Montana, to Sioux City, Iowa - a journey of 2,000 miles to gather material about the West. During his travels he visited with old trappers, became familiar with leaders in a number of Indian communities, and did extensive research throughout the Plains and Rocky Mountains that he used in his writings.

While Washington Irving never visited the West, he researched its geography and ethnography extensively before writing about it. He had met the explorer Benjamin Bonneville, a French-born officer in the United States Army who had been at one time a fur trapper, and explorer in the American West. Intrigued with Bonneville's stories of the territories beyond the Rocky Mountains, Irving purchased his maps and journals for $1,000. He then used these materials as the basis for his book, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (1837) and other of his writings.

The Many Who Eschewed Authenticity in Their Writings of the Early American West

Although there was a paucity of well written credible stories written about the West during late 1800s and early 1900's, there was no shortage of poorly written, cliché-ridden, pulp paper trash foisted on the reading public that lacked any semblance of accuracy and authenticity.

Beginning in the mid-1800s thousands of cheap potboilers were being churned out regularly, initially in the form of story papers based on scant knowledge of the West, in favor of invention and fantasy. The best that could be said for most of the these publications was that they excited interest in the West, especially among young men looking for adventure, and served as an impetus for serious writers to turn their talents westward for subject matter.

Story Papers

The earliest of the Western potboilers were ten-page offerings of cheap pulp fiction promoted by American publishers as *Story Papers*. These were periodicals similar to literary magazines, but pitched at the level of children and early teen agers. They were unique in featuring colorful illustrations along with the text. Most authors had never seen the West, which in no way impeded their creation of lurid tales embellished with vivid descriptions of a wildly romanticized West, largely devoid of fact and reality

The first known edition of a story paper was *The Young Gentleman's Magazine*, published in London in 1777. It was perhaps the most successful literary magazine of all time, however the format excited only modest interest among American readers until stories about the American West began to appear in US editions in the mid -1800s. Then they became increasingly popular until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Pulp magazines that specialized in Westerns included *Western Story Magazine*, *Star Western, West, Cowboy Stories,* and *Ranch Romances.* The simultaneous popularity

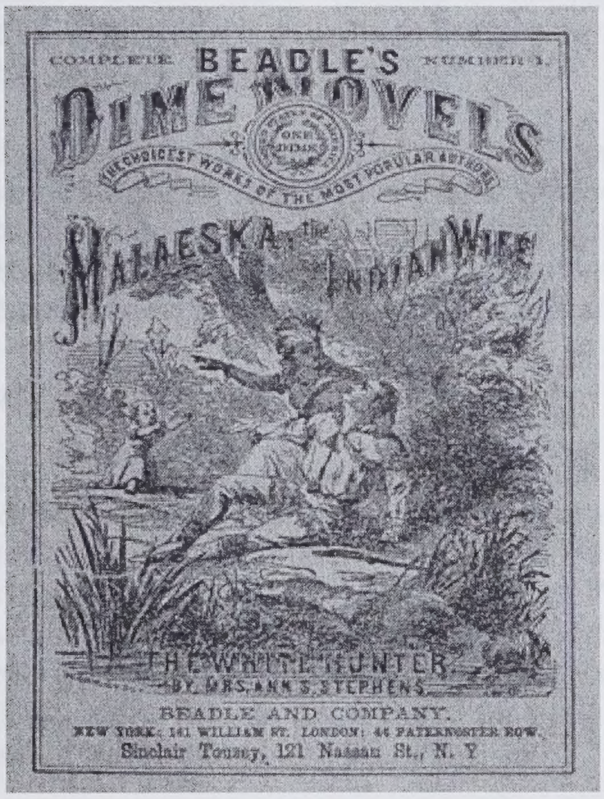
of Western movies in the 1920s also helped gain readership in the United States by promoting Westerns to easterners. The interest in all things Western peaked in the 1960s due to the popularity of movies, and televised Westerns such *as Bonanza, Rawhide, Gun Smoke* and *Have Gun, Will Travel.*

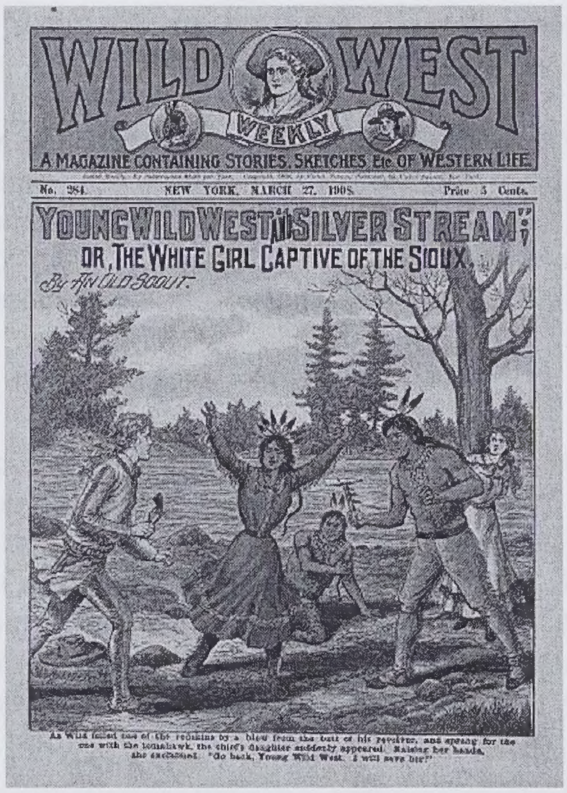
Dime Novels

Dime novels overlapped with and eventually replaced the story papers as a source of Western tales. They excited interest by their more elaborate format and longer stories published in 100 page paperbacks (20,000 to 30,000 words). They featured Western adventure aimed at an adult male audience. These paperbacks sold for 10 cents a copy at a time when most books cost over a dollar. They became known as *Dime Novels* when Beadle & Adams published *Maleaska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter*, a wildly popular story, written by Ann S. Stephens (1860).

Maleaska, a romantic tale about an Indian maiden who marries a white settler *was* the first publication in what became *Beadle's Dime* Novel series. More than 65,000 copies were sold within the first few months, whetting the appetites of readers for more of the same.

Initially, many of the dime novels were written by well-known authors, such as Ellis, Metta V. Victor, Prentiss Ingraham, and Ned Buntline who published numerous volumes throughout their careers. Increasingly, newspaper reporters were lured into the industry of writing dime novels, by the potential of earning between seventy-five and one hundred dollars for seven to ten days of work.


COMPLETE
BEADLE'S
NUMBER 1.
DIME NOVELS
ONE DIME
THE CHOICEST WORKS OF THE MOST POPULAR AUTHORS
MALAESKA, the INDIAN WIFE
THE WHITE HUNTER.
BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.
BEADLE AND COMPANY.
NEW YORK: 141 WILLIAM ST. LONDON: 44 PATERNOSTER ROW.
Sinclair Tousey, 121 Nassau St., N. Y.


WILD WEST
WEEKLY
A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.
No. 284.
NEW YORK, MARCH 27, 1908.
Price 5 Cents.
YOUNG WILD WEST'S "SILVER STREAM";
OR, THE WHITE GIRL CAPTIVE OF THE SIOUX.
By AN OLD SCOUT.
As Wild felled one of the redskins by a blow from the butt of his revolver, and sprang for the one with the tomahawk, the chief's daughter suddenly appeared. Raising her hands, she exclaimed: "Go back, Young Wild West. I will save him!"

Publishers sought authors with personal experience in the West and on the frontier who could bring factual detail and local color to their books. They were few and far between, but authors as Louisa May Alcott and Bret Harte wrote stories published in dime novels, and Mark Twain read them as research and inspiration for his writing.

However, most dime novels were not well written, or were written by authors with no experience in the West. Beadle & Adams published over 7,000 dime novels between 1860 and 1897 by authors who met neither criteria. They wrote for an uncritical market that had benefited from a sudden rise in literacy throughout the country. Soon after the Civil War, the United States was suddenly full of young men hungry for tales of adventure and who were able to read as a result of compulsory schooling laws passed by congress in 1870.

Dime novels were hardly significant literary efforts, but they did encourage many to take up reading as well as paved the way for more serious Western writing that followed. They tended to be simple morality tales of the struggle to conquer the elements of a grim and desolate frontier.

Plots were largely based on a limited number of obligatory themes. The settings were ranches, homesteads, isolated US Army forts, Indian villages, and small frontier towns (with the inevitable saloon, general store, livery stable, jailhouse and a church). The cast of characters typically included a cool, detached hero who was a frontiersman, mountain man, cowboy or sheriff, a fragile heroine in danger, possibly a madam from the local bawdy house with a heart of gold, and of course, despicable outlaws in black hats, and savage (rarely noble) Indians. The action was inevitably based on conflict that emphasized violence and gunplay arising from disputes between cattle ranchers and farmers ("sodbusters'), clashes of lawmen with bank, and stage coach robbers, and battles of the U.S. Cavalry with Indians who took a dim view of having their lands stolen in the name of Manifest Destiny.

The paperback dime novel of only 100 pages or so, was pocket sized, cheaply made, hastily written by unskilled authors who knew little about West, and short on editing except for advice on how to make dime novels more sellable, which the editor of Beadle & Adams offered in the form of an admonition to: *kill more Indians*. What evolved from and succeeded the dime novel; the traditional Western was different in all respects.

Traditional Westerns

The traditional Western had wide appeal and staying power. It was an instantly recognizable icon on its way to becoming a singularly American literary hallmark. It is, in brief a category of fiction centered on a geographic area. It represents a genre of literature that glorified the American Old West, a vast area extending from west of the Mississippi River to just beyond the Rocky Mountains; an area with names that stir reader's imaginations: Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, Wyoming, Kansas, the Dakotas and Montana. Westerns are set as early as the Battle of the Alamo in 1836 and as recently as today.

Books now considered to be traditional Westerns began to appear in the mid-1800's as longer stories, still in the mode of Western dime novels, but better written, some by

authors well known in other genres. They tended to be more sophisticated with realistic plots based on accurate geographical and historical details, benefitted from greater attention to editing and were published with a hard cover. The Western became firmly established as a distinctive literary entity with the publication of *The Virginian*, by Owen Wister in 1902, which is regarded as the first critically recognized Western novel. The popularity of Westerns then grew as more and more capable authors adopted the medium. The public had an insatiable appetite for Westerns and their authors worked hard to feed it.

I gave up trying to count authors of published Westerns, even authors who rote more than one. There are just too many. However, the output of the most prolific is worthy of mention. Just nine of the many authors of Westerns produced a total of 1015 full-length Westerns during their combined careers. The all time champion, Frederick Schiller Faust (aka Max Brand) is credited with having written 500 Westerns, stories that Wikipedia blesses as being both "thoughtful and literary". It is claimed that he would write 12,000 words in a weekend. Other very productive authors of Westerns include: Louis L'Amour - 104, Zane Grey - 90, William McLeod Raine - 86, Thomas M. Reid - 75, Henry Wilson Allen - 50, Elmore Leonard - 47, Larry McMurty - 35, and Clarence E. Mumford (Hopalong Cassidy stories) – 28.

Foreign writers joined the gold rush of Western writing. One of the most famous, certainly in Germany is Karl Friedrich May, who became the bestselling German writer of all time. He was chiefly noted for his Western books set in America's Old West. To date more than 200 million copies of his 70 novels have been sold worldwide, and his works translated into over 40 languages. He created the characters of Winnetou, the wise chief of the Apache Tribe, and Old Shatterhand. Both were familiar to every German school boy of the day and are to many still today.

May had not visited the places he described, but worked hard to make up for his lack of personal knowledge of the American West through careful study of secondary sources including maps, travel accounts and guidebooks, as well as anthropological and linguistic studies.

Thanks to successful authors such as Louis L'Amour and Zane Grey whose writings captivated the reading public, the popularity of Western fiction exploded in the 1920s. The enduring appeal of L'Amour and Grey's writing is hard to explain. There were many contemporary writers of much greater talent who never came close to mustering the following that they enjoyed.

Grey, who was not a realistic writer, wrote psycho-dramas about the spiritual odysseys of the human soul. For him personal spiritual rebirth came at the expense of great effort to vanquish evil. His stories combined the wilderness experience and romance in the search for spiritual truth. On paper, the description certainly isn't exciting.

L'Amour developed 7 basic plots in his pulp Western stories then used the same basic plots over and over again in his Westerns, which also suffered from being hurriedly written, typically submitted for publication in the first draft, and went unedited. Inaccuracies and inconsistencies in his stories were rampant. Some characters died more than once in his novels, an old man in one part of a story might turn out to be in his twenties on another page, bad men were often shot with models of six-guns not yet invented. His readers didn't care.

Over the years, a total of 320 million copies of his works were sold and many TV and movie adaptions made. His stories were translated into 20 languages and all 98 of his novels are still in print. Barbara A. Bannon In her contribution to Weinberg's *The Louis L'Amour Companion,* wrote, "What makes a L'Amour western so popular, in addition to his solid story-telling ability is his carefully researched and authentic historical background". It would appear that authenticity trumps accuracy and careful editing.

Enthusiasm for the Western paralleled that of the dime novel, peaking in the 1970s due to popularity of Western movies, and televised Westerns, then slumping as the public lost interest in things Western. Movie and TV fare, reached a low in the 2000s. Today most book stores carry only a small number of Western novels and Western short story collections.

In an effort to breathe new life into the Western a number of authors experimented with the Science Fiction Western - a novel in a Western setting with elements of science fiction that occurs in the past, or in a world resembling the past sometimes incorporating other elements such as fantasy and horror.

The film serial *The Phantom Empire,* starring Gene Autry took place on a Dude Ranch. Released in 1935, it is possibly the earliest science fiction Western. Since then, Science Fiction Westerns have appeared in the form of movies, television late night fodder for insomniacs, comic books and a few novels. The first science fiction westerns in book form were Stephen King's novels that comprised *The Dark Tower Series* (1982-2004). In spite of its popularity in other genres, science fiction hasn't hybridized well with the Western.

Modern Artistic Western Writing

Refer to a book as a Western and everyone knows what you are talking about. The word conjures up a distinctive form of prose set in a circumscribed time and place, is based on a limited number of predictable plots, has an action-oriented book cover and promises a thrill-a-minute of easy reading. Unfortunately the intellectually satisfying artistic fiction writing indigenous to the American West that has filled the ecological niche vacated by the demise of the Western is not so conveniently characterized. This is somewhat awkward, if you like to put things in pigeon holes in order to give them names. I have opted for a name without an adequate pigeon hole.

As a matter of convenience and with nothing better to offer, I will refer to examples of artistic American West fiction as a "Western Story", a less than totally satisfactory name used by John in his anthology, *The Western Story*, a collection of the cream of western writings [2]. About the only thing it has going for it in its favor is that tacking on "Story" sort of distinguishes it from a plain old "Western".

Tuska makes two points in the Introduction to his anthology that help explain why it is hard to come up with a better name than Western Story. His first point is that, *The most fundamental observation* [one] *can make about* [the entity], *whether in film or in fiction, is that it is impossible – absolutely impossible - to generalize on the subject. It is quite simply too vast and too varied a domain of human endeavor.* And his second is that, *There have been as many views of the American West in the last two and a half centuries as there have been authors.*

These caveats notwithstanding, he asserts that, *the Western Story constitutes the single most important literary movement in the history of the United States and the only unique body of literature which this country has contributed to the wealth of world culture.* Having immersed myself in all forms of Western writing for the last several months, I concur.

While making broad sweeping generalizations about the essence of the Western Story may not be possible, it helps to think about it in the context of Gopnik's concept that geography defines history in terms of the elements of: races, faces, places and spaces.

The History of Races

In terms of the history of the American Indians, there is a rich unrecorded oral history of the Western Indian tribes, although undoubtedly much was lost by the devastation of their societies by deaths due to the white man's inadvertent introduction of infection, to privation resulting from intentional stealing of the Indians' hunting grounds, Indian wars and intentional massacres by settlers and belligerent soldiers. Fortunately many Indian stories and myths were preserved from surviving tribal elders by younger concerned members of the various tribes who had learned to read and write, and by the efforts of early social anthropologists aware of their historical importance.

The History of Faces

The westward migration of the white man brought about epic historical changes. Initially the invaders came not as a conquering army, as was the case in the history of Europe and Asia, but rather as individuals, who were relentless in their lemming-like migration. It was the aggregate of their numbers that usurped the land. In this respect the powerful railroad, mining and lumber barons who would correspond to Gopnik's "bosses" and "chiefs" came later to amass great wealth as socially-approved and government-sponsored thieves and despoilers of the land.

The History of Places

Villages, towns and even a few cities sprang up in the West as the population grew supported by transcontinental railroad connections and the development of commerce. Although the West in the mid-1880s was still a frontier, and a long way from the economic and political center of the country, financiers and politicians recognized that it was a vitally important as a gateway to the West coast.

The US government offered free land to homesteaders, and promoters representing the railroads and commercial enterprises promised ideal work and farming conditions to lure families from the East and areas of Europe who initially thought they had found the Promised Land. Ironically there was abundant rain for the first few years. Then the weather reverted to its normal pattern of annual drought producing a succession of crop failures. Many farmers and businesses went bankrupt, closed their doors and moved away. Those with no other option, or too stubborn to leave, stayed behind eking out a living as best they could.

This was the reality that was overlooked in the predominantly fanciful western stories of an uninformed pop culture; i.e. the paper stories, serialized magazine articles, and dime novel portrayals of adventure on the American frontier. It took nearly 100 years for the American West to become sufficiently settled to encourage journalists and established

writers of fiction and non-fiction from the East to go and see the West for themselves. Until that time, the history of the West was largely dominated by fantasy and unreality.

The History of Spaces

The histories of races, faces and places have all contributed to evolution of Western American literature, but in the final analysis the history of the impact of space is perhaps the most important.

Once transported to the West, a great many of the early migrants were reluctant or just plain refused to leave their new home in spite of the difficulty of making a living in agriculture and the hardships of living in climes of where summer days could be well over 100 degrees above zero with no rain, and winter days of 40 degrees or more below zero with heavy snows.

The dilemma of forgoing life in an incomparable physical space for economic reasons or staying put at the price of a reduced standard of living has been with us since the West was opened. Much of the West is exquisitely beautiful with forests, mountains, rivers and streams, vast numbers of birds and animals, and sunrises and sunsets that defy description. For anyone with a soul, a sense of beauty and the spirit of adventure, surrendering to a hostile climate was unacceptable. Fortunately jobs with the railroads, lumber and mining industries became available for a few decades.

The situation today is much the same as it was in late 19th and part of the 20th century. Except that the railroad, mining and lumber industries have played out, and little has been developed to take their place, other than the drilling for natural gas in the Dakotas and Eastern Montana. The economy in most of the rural western states is much worse than that in other parts of the country, yet the inhabitants of these areas like the forbearers refuse to leave. Working at more than one job, or married couples both working is common in order to make ends meet without having to move.

One need only pick up a copy of the 1161 page, five pound monograph: *The Last Best Place – A Montana Anthology* (1988) with the contributions of 157 great Western writers (edited by William Kittredge and Annick Smith) to appreciate the driving force of space in advancing the creative art of writing about American West. This opus magnum was conceived of as a birthday present to the state of Montana on the occasion of its statehood centennial celebrating just a portion of the Western literary landscape.

Subjects of the Western Story as Compared to the Traditional Western

I've set the stage, a Western Stage that is, for a discussion of how and why the subjects of Western Stories are so different from those of the Traditional Western. And they are different. I surveyed a sample of well known Western Stories written by respected author, who turned up a wide assortment of formats and plots based on:

1. Environmental issues
2. A realistic portrayal of Western life
3. The impact of frontier isolation and hardships
4. The subordination of nature in the name of civilization
5. The injustice of disregarding Indian territorial rights
6. The illegal acquisition of settlers' holdings by ruthless land barons

7. The exercise of private mob justice vs. the rule of law
8. Regional history
9. Life's disappointments
10. Personal failure
11. Optimism and enterprise
12. Personal psychological struggles
13. The meaning of life
14. The power of place
15. Women's rights

A few specific examples of the extent to which the writings of authors of the Western Story have departed from the macho hero, hair raising plots and formulaic writing of authors of Traditional Western follow:

John Neighard emphasized in his novels that fulfillment of both the cultural and spiritual ideals of Americans should not be separated from their role as part of Nature; and that man must learn to both love and respect the land.

Willa Cather wrote about her childhood experiences and friendship with people who were part of her life in growing up on the Nebraska prairies. She wrote in a nostalgic and melancholic tone with warmth and humanity, criticized by some for dealing only with the positive aspects of pioneer life.

B.M. Bower, the first woman to gain an international reputation and following as an author of Western stories, portrayed the frontier women and cowboys realistically based on her own experience growing up in Montana. The settings and events of her stories sprang from convincingly human characters playing their parts in a rugged environment of the northern cattle lands.

Max Brand, also a writer of psycho-drams dramas in which the psychological and spiritual meaning of life was more important than geography. He dealt with the effects of events on the soul, the inner spiritual changes wrought by ordeal and adversity, and the power of love and the meaning of life.

Ernest Haycox, the doyen of the Western story for an entire generation of American writers, combined character and drama with historical accuracy felt that a man who writes about the West ought to live in it. For him, the West symbolized a way of deciphering life, spiritual freedom, and an anodyne for disillusionment, no matter how fraught with hardships. His stories introduced a wide variety of real and sympathetic characters as players in intense dramas of frontier life.

Peter Dawson (Jonathan Hurff Glidden) is recognized as a highly gifted writer. His stories are based on extensive research and are remarkable for their accuracy, suspense and narrative complexity and the interplay of characters in their frontier communities.

Walter Van Tilburg Clark wrote vivid descriptions of physical topography, and about human personality. His novel, The Ox-Bow Incident is considered to be the first modern Western, without the genre's usual clichés and formulaic plots. In it, he examines the issues of law and order and human culpability making the point that even men of reason and sensitivity can be cruel and make terrible irrevocable mistakes.

Les Savage, Jr. focused on making the Western story realistic and accurate. He wrote riveting, highly atmospheric stories aided by his familiarity with flora of the changing seasons, and the ways of horses, mules, and frontier men, women against a backdrop of knowledge of mining, geology, period furniture, dress, anthropology, zoology and firearms and other weapons.

Will Henry was known for sympathetic portrayal of Indian characters to make their perspectives and viewpoints an integral part of the story. In many of his best novels he deals with the failure of frontier experience; the greed, rape of the land and genocide. His stories were profoundly empathetic with the casualties of Western history.

Elmer Kelton used fiction to illuminate a truthful history of the American West. He specialized in humanity, depth and verisimilitude. His stories are of sensitively drawn men and women of integrity who suffer hardships in building their homes, working the land and struggling with adversity with hope.

T.V. Olsen's character driven stories was populated with realistic humans caught in the moral web of questions – is this right, is it wrong, how ought one to live, what is important in life – psychological motivations directly related to historical events.

The explanation as to why the subject matter of Western Stories is so different from that of the Traditional Western is multifactorial and complex. The authors of Western Stories in comparison to authors of Western are on the average more likely to be: better educated, trained in creative writing or journalism, born and raised in/and a long term resident of the West, a woman, and a Native American.

There is an interesting array of backgrounds in their ranks. Authors of the modern Western Story not only include trained creative writers, but also college-educated cowboys, engineers, attorneys, biologists, geologists, physicians, law enforcement officers, musicians, ministers and economists, to name a few, who have become gifted writers; a few are Pulitzer Prize winners

Societal issues that confront all Americans are now legitimate topics for inclusion in novels set in and written about the West and are readily accepted by the readers of Western stories. Horses, cattle, ranches, heroes in white and villains in black hats are still acceptable parts of the Western Story, but gratuitous bloodshed and violence, racism and sexism are not.

Suggested Western Story Authors

Rick Bass

Rick Bass grew up in Houston, and started writing short stories on his lunch breaks while working as a petroleum geologist in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1987, he moved with his wife, the artist Elizabeth Hughes Bass, to the remote Yaak Valley of northwest Montana, where he works to protect his adopted home from roads and logging.

Fiction
The watch. (1994)
Platte River. 1994)
In the Loyal Mountains.1995)
The Sky, The Stars, The Wilderness. (1997)
Fiber. University of Georgia Press. (1998).
Where the Sea Used to Be.(1999)
The Hermit's Story. (2003)
The Diezmo. (2005)
The Lives of Rocks: Stories. (2006)
Nashville Chrome: A Novel (2010)

Nonfiction
The Deer Pasture. (1996)
Wild to the Heart. (1997)
Oil Notes. Flamingo.(1990)
Winter: Notes from Montana. (1991)
The Ninemile Wolves. (2003)
The Lost Grizzlies. (1997)
The Book of Yaak. (1997)
The New Wolves: The Return of the Mexican Wolf to the American Southwest. (2007).
Brown Dog of the Yaak: Essays on Art and Activism. (1999)
Colter: The True Story of the Best Dog I Ever Had. (2000)
Why I Came West: A Memoir. (2008)
The Wild Marsh: Four Seasons at Home in Montana. (2009)
Caribou Rising: Defending the Porcupine Caribou Herd, Gwitch-'in Culture and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. (2004).

William Kittredge

Kittredge up on a ranch in southeastern Oregon At age 35 he retired from ranching and enrolled in Iowa Writers' Workshop at University of Iowa where he completed his M.A. degree in Fine Arts. He was a Stegner Fellow and taught creative writing at University of Montana.

Non-Fiction
Owning It All. (1987)
Hole in the Sky: A Memoir. (1992)
Who Owns the West? (1995)
The Nature of Generosity. (2000)
Southwestern Homelands. (2002)
The Willow Field. (2006)
The Next Rodeo: New and Selected Essays. (2006)

Co-producer: *A River Runs Through It* (movie)
Lead Editor: The Last Best Place

Norman MaClean

Norman Maclean grew up in the northern Rocky Mountains of Montana in the early decades of the 20th century. He worked many summers in logging camps and for the U.S. Forest Service. He later received a B.A. degree from Dartmouth and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He was William Rainey Harper Professor of English at the University of Chicago. He died in 1990.

Non-Fiction

A River Runs Through It and Other Stories. (1976)
Young Men and Fire. (1992)
The Norman Maclean Reader.(2008) Selections from his work plus previously unpublished material including letters and his writings on George Armstrong Custer and the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

Thomas McGuane

McGuane grew up in the Midwest. His primary education was at boarding school, Cranbrook School, in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He received a B.A.in English from Michigan State University in 1962. He studied playwriting and dramatic literature at Yale University earning an M.F.A. in 1965 and was then a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University in1966–67.

Fiction

The Sporting Club. (1969)
The Bushwacked Piano. (1971)
Ninety-Two in the Shade. (1973)
Panama (1978. autobiographical)
Nobody's Angel. (1981)
In the Crazies: Book and Portfolio. (1984)
Something to Be Desired. (1985,)
To Skin a Cat. (1986)
Keep the Change. (1989)
Nothing but Blue Skies. (1992,)
The Cadence of Grass. (2002,)
Gallatin Canyon. (2006)
Driving on the Rim. (2010)
The Casserole. (2012)

Non-Fiction

An Outside Chance. (1981)
Best American Sports Writing. (1992)
Live Water. (1996)
Some Horses. (1999)
The Longest Silence, (2000)
Upstream: Fly Fishing in the American Northwest. (1999)
Horses. (2005)

David Quammen

Quammen was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, graduated from St. Xavier High School in 1966. He is a Yale graduate and former Rhodes Scholar. During his graduate studies at Oxford, he studied literature, concentrating on the works of William Faulkner. Quammen was drawn to Montana in the early '70's for the trout fishing. He is an award-winning American science, nature and travel writer and the author of fifteen books. When not travelling the world researching his projects, Quammen resides in Bozeman, Montana.

Non-Fiction

Natural Acts: A Sidelong View of Science and Nature. (1985)
The Flight of the Iguana (1988)
The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinctions. (1996)
Wild Thoughts From Wild Places; Scribner. (1999)

The Boilerplate Rhino: Nature in the Eye of the Beholder. (2001)
Best American Science and Nature Writing (2000)
Monster of God: The Man-Eating Predator in the Jungles of History and the Mind. (2003)
The Reluctant Mr. Darwin: An Intimate Portrait of Charles Darwin and the Making of His Theory of Evolution. (2006)
Natural Act: A Sidelong View of Science and Nature. (2009)
Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic. (2012)

Fiction

To Walk the Line. (1970)
*Walking Out. (*1980).
The Zolta Configuration. (1983)
The Soul of Viktor Tronko, (1987)
*Blood Line: Stories of Fathers and Sons. (*1988)

Wallace Stegner

Stegner grew up in Great Falls, Montana, Salt Lake City, Utah, and in the village of Eastend, Saskatchewan He received a B.A. degree at the University of Utah in 1930, then studied at the Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, where he received a M.A. degree in 1932 and a Ph.D. in 1935. He taught creative writing at the University of Wisconsin, Harvard University and Stanford. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1972 and the U.S.National Book Award in 1977. He died in a car accident in 1993.

Fiction

Remembering Laughter. (1937)
The Potter's House. (1938)
On a Darkling Plain. (1940)
Fire and Ice. (1941)
The Big Rock Candy Mountain. (1943)
Second Growth. (1947)
The Preacher And the Slave aka *Joe Hill.* (1950)
A Shooting Star. (1961)
All the Little Live Things. (1967)
Angle of Repose. (1971) - winner of the Pulitzer Prize[2]
The Spectator Bird. (1976) - winner of the National Book Award[3]
Recapitulation. (1979)
Crossing to Safety. (1987)

Non-Fiction

Mormon Country. (1942)
One Nation. (1945)
Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West. (1954)
Wolf Willow: A History, a Story, and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier (autobiography.) (1962)
Wilderness Letter. (1960),
The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail. (1964)
Teaching the Short Story. (1966)
The Sound of Mountain Water. (1969)
Discovery! The Search for Arabian Oil. (1971)
The Uneasy Chair: A Biography of Bernard Devoto. (1974)
Writer in America. (1982)
Conversations With Wallace Stegner on Western History and Literature. (1983)
This Is Dinosaur: Echo Park Country And Its Magic Rivers. (1985)

American Places. (1985)
On the Teaching of Creative Writing. (1988)
Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs. (autobiographical). (1992)

Ivan Doig

Ivan Doig is my favorite author of Western fiction. He is out of alphabetical order, but I wanted to save him for last. He has been hailed as the new dean of western literature, and as a worthy successor to Wallace Stegner.

In his writings, he eloquently captures many of life's most universal themes; the relationship between the past and the present, environmental protection versus exploitation of the land and its resources, the contributions of individuals, and the importance of place.

Doig was born in White Sulphur Springs, Montana, in 1939. He grew up in the Rocky Mountain frontier that provided the inspiration for much of his writing. He decided early on that he wanted a different life for himself different from that of his parents and grandparents who were ranch hands, sheepherders, and homesteaders. He received B.A. and M.A. degrees in journalism from Northwestern University and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Washington.

He chose a career as a newspaperman where he honed his skills as a writer, and developed a critical eye for detail and an ear for nuanced dialogue. As a student of history, Doig acquired the research skills and patience to search out background details that stamp his work with an unmistakable air of authenticity.

Doig has written 11 novels and three non-fiction books populated with characters who have carved out an existence in the West through grit, determination and hard work: ranchers and rangers, cowboys and cooks, sheepherders and truck drivers. All were people he knew firsthand. Starting with his memoirs, *This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind* (1979) and *Winter Brothers: A Season At the Edge of America* (1980), Doig recounted his family history and the stories of his childhood.

He manages to capture the essence of an actual geographic region within an imagined fictional counterpart. Following the publication of his first work of fiction, the historical novel *The Sea Runners* (1982), Doig began writing what is known as his "McCaskill Family" trilogy. In the *English Creek* (1984), Doing recreated life in a small fictional Montana town, Two Medicine County, during the years between the Great Depression and the beginning of World War II. The second volume, *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* (1987), harked back to 1889 and Montana's entry into statehood, and in the final volume, *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana* (1990), he describes how during Montana's centennial year the state's past shaped its future.

His most recent novel, *The Bartender's Tale* is as delightful as its 13 predecessors. They aren't page turners. But they make you want to ration them out a few at a time to make them last as long as possible.

There isn't time to cover these other Western literary forms of short stories, essays and poetry. However, I can't resist ending with a moving work by my favorite cowboy poet, Wallace McCrea.

Reincarnation

"What does Reincarnation mean?"
A cowpoke ast his friend.
His pal replied, "It happens when
Yer life has reached its end.
They comb yer hair, and warsh yer neck,
And clean yer fingernails,
And lay you in a padded box
Away from life's travails."

"The box and you goes in a hole,
That's been dug into the ground.
Reincarnation starts in when
Yore planted 'neath a mound.
Them clods melt down, just like yer box,
And you who is inside.
And then yore just beginnin' on
Yer transformation ride."

"In a while, the grass'll grow
Upon yer rendered mound.
Till some day on yer moldered grave
A lonely flower is found.
And say a hoss should wander by
And graze upon this flower
That once wuz you, but now's become
Yer vegetative bower."

"The posy that the hoss done ate
Up, with his other feed,
Makes bone, and fat, and muscle
Essential to the steed,
But some is left that he can't use
And so it passes through,
And finally lays upon the ground
This thing, that once wuz you."

"Then say, by chance, I wanders by
And sees this upon the ground,
And I ponders, and I wonders at,
This object that I found.
I thinks of reincarnation,
Of life and death, and such,
And come away concludin' Slim,
You ain't changed, all that much."

The Silences of War

James E. Sherman

Tiburon, CA

Written for "the club"

October 18, 2010

Dr. Barrett Weber & Mr. Wesley Moore, Hosts

October 18, 2010

Qualification & Disclaimer:

This paper describes times and places in history based upon research and related anecdotes. It is provided for the members of the club for their education, edification and entertainment. The facts, presented as such, are true. Of necessity, not all details can be presented consistently and events have been selected to highlight points in time. Another author would have chosen differently; hence, this is offered from a very limited perspective. The key players have been represented accurately, however cannot be presented in a complete fashion. Any inaccuracies are entirely unintentional, and do not represent an intent to portray the facts in other than a historical summation.

October 18, 2010

Berkeley, 1936

McNamara’s alarm clock exploded on the table next to the beds; “”time to get up Sherman – six o’clock!” – shit. Every day, weekday or weekend, the upper classman greeted the dawn with the same raw discipline and determination as he addressed everything. It’s not that Bob Sherman didn’t work his ass off too, just that Robert McNamara took it upon himself to set the example, and expected his junior fraternity brother to follow his lead.

A gray glow of light shimmered through the window from Piedmont Circle into the room of the Fiji House (Phi Gamma Delta). Worn adobe-red bricks were the only warmth in the room, framing the tired curtains.

Another day at Cal; chemistry, math, and biology ahead for the day; most of it a matter of memorization and problem solving. All necessary for medical school; but, a real grind.

For McNamara, it was political science and industry. Softer subjects than pre-med, but you wouldn’t know it by looking. Every question was dissected, every economic fact retained, and arguments debated until they were exhausted, or at least the opponent was defeated.

Robert McNamara graduated in 1937 and immediately headed to Harvard Business School, while Bob Sherman moved to medical school and residency in San Francisco. As the fraternity brothers were beginning their careers, Hitler was on the move in Europe and the Japanese Empire was expanding in Asia.

PHI GAMMA DELTA

Bennett Hamlin
Bishopp Harris
McNamara Sherman
Pierpont Skinner
Crosse Stoddart
Crowe Struthers
Fowler Boucke
Hunt Fleming
Knowles Haas
McDonald Hawkins
Plummer McMahon
Scatena Newton
Woodward Tutton

2620 BANCROFT WAY. FOUNDED AT JEFFERSON COLLEGE, 1848
DELTA XI CHAPTER ESTABLISHED 1886
SEVENTY-THREE CHAPTERS

UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATES

LeRoy Briggs
Harold L. Bruce
Charles Derleth, Jr.
W. H. Durham
Norman E. A. Hinds
Woodbridge Metcalf

SENIORS

Harlo U. Bennett, Jr.
Robert J. Bishopp
Richard P. Jones
Robert S. McNamara
David McNutt
Judson Madden
J. Carson Magill
Philip G. Pierpont

JUNIORS

Ortus F. Adams
Robert Cowden
David H. Crosse
Richard D. Crowe
Edwin M. Hamlin
Ross E. Hamlin, Jr.
Armor W. Harris
Robert S. Sherman, Jr.
George W. Skinner
David A. Stoddart
John R. Struthers

SOPHOMORES

Jack Cowden
John M. Fowler
Frank Hunt
Gorhan B. Knowles
Paul L. McDonald
Robert P. Pierpont
Pierson Plummer
Frederick N. Scatena
Robert D. Woodward

FRESHMEN

Robert W. Boucke
John V. Flemming
Madison Haas
Thomas W. Hawkins
Robert McMahon
Richard V. Newton
Stanley M. Tutton

October 18, 2010

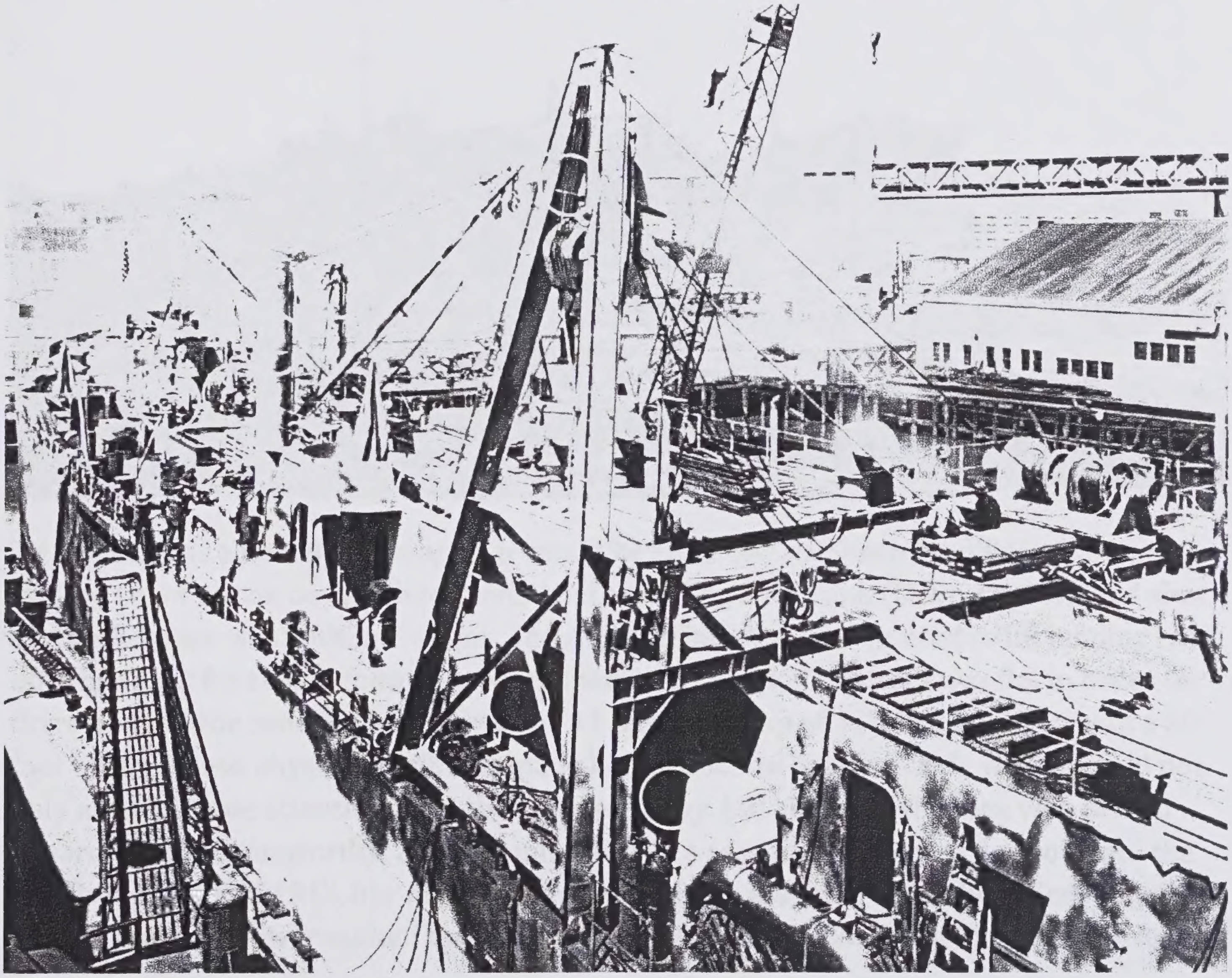
Doctor Bob in the South Pacific

USS Agenor

South Pacific, 1943

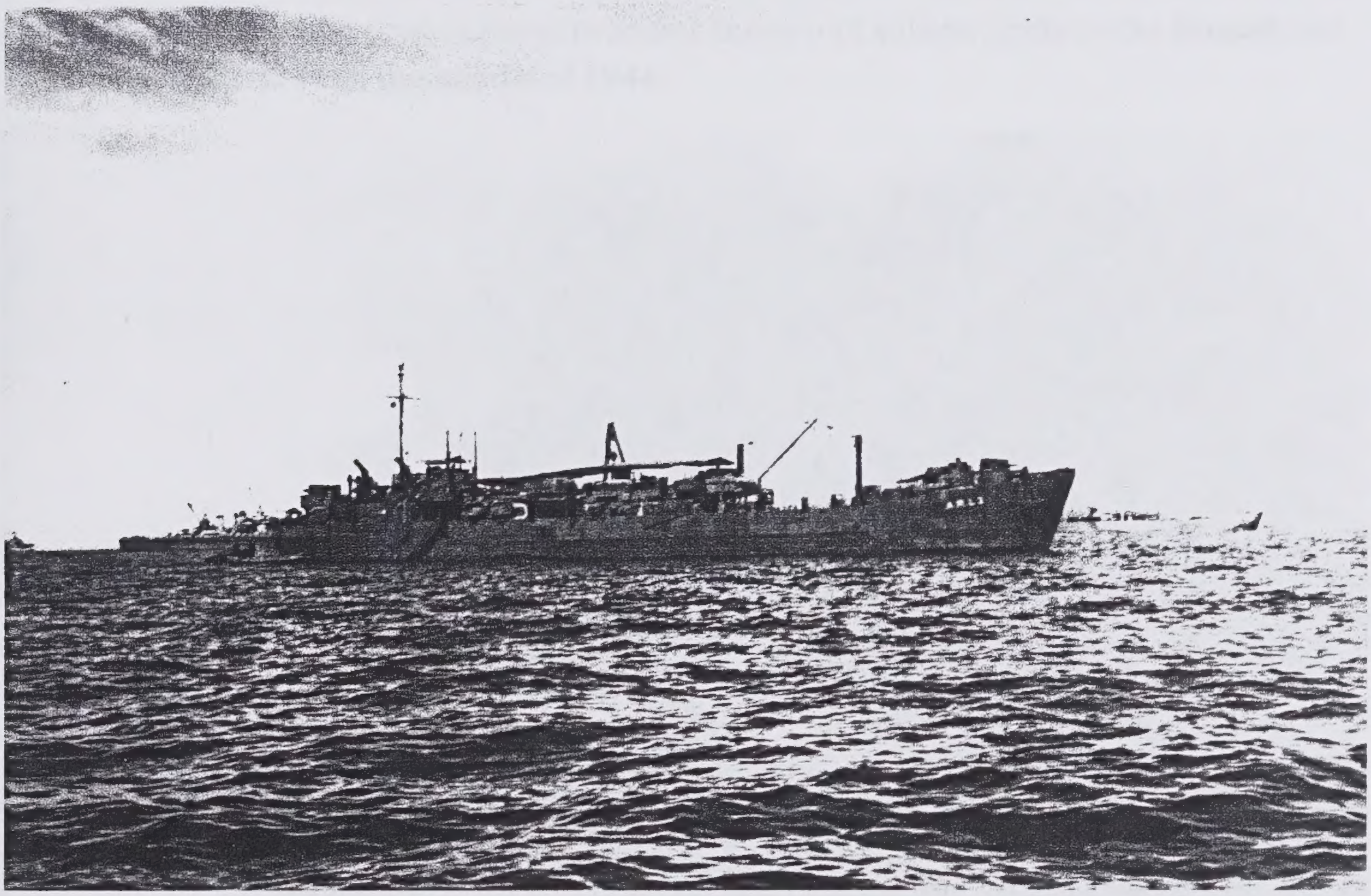
Slapping her way west into the Pacific, the ship had begun to get her sea-legs. For her young Doctor Bob Sherman, the smell of burning paint and surprises of breaking her in had diminished. She was becoming more predictable, and feeling like home. Sherman knew this would soon end, as they approached the fighting. Then the uncertainties would come from without, and the thought made him queasy. The crew had lived on adrenaline from San Francisco to Hawaii. For the first week there were supplies to stow, gear to organize, and watches to keep. Everyone was wound up; everything was new, and nobody wanted to make a mistake. Nerves were frayed, yet the officers kept trying to look like they had done it before, and the sailors eager to comply. This would change.

"A" frame hoist on USS Agenor (ARL-3) at San Francisco on 8 August 1943



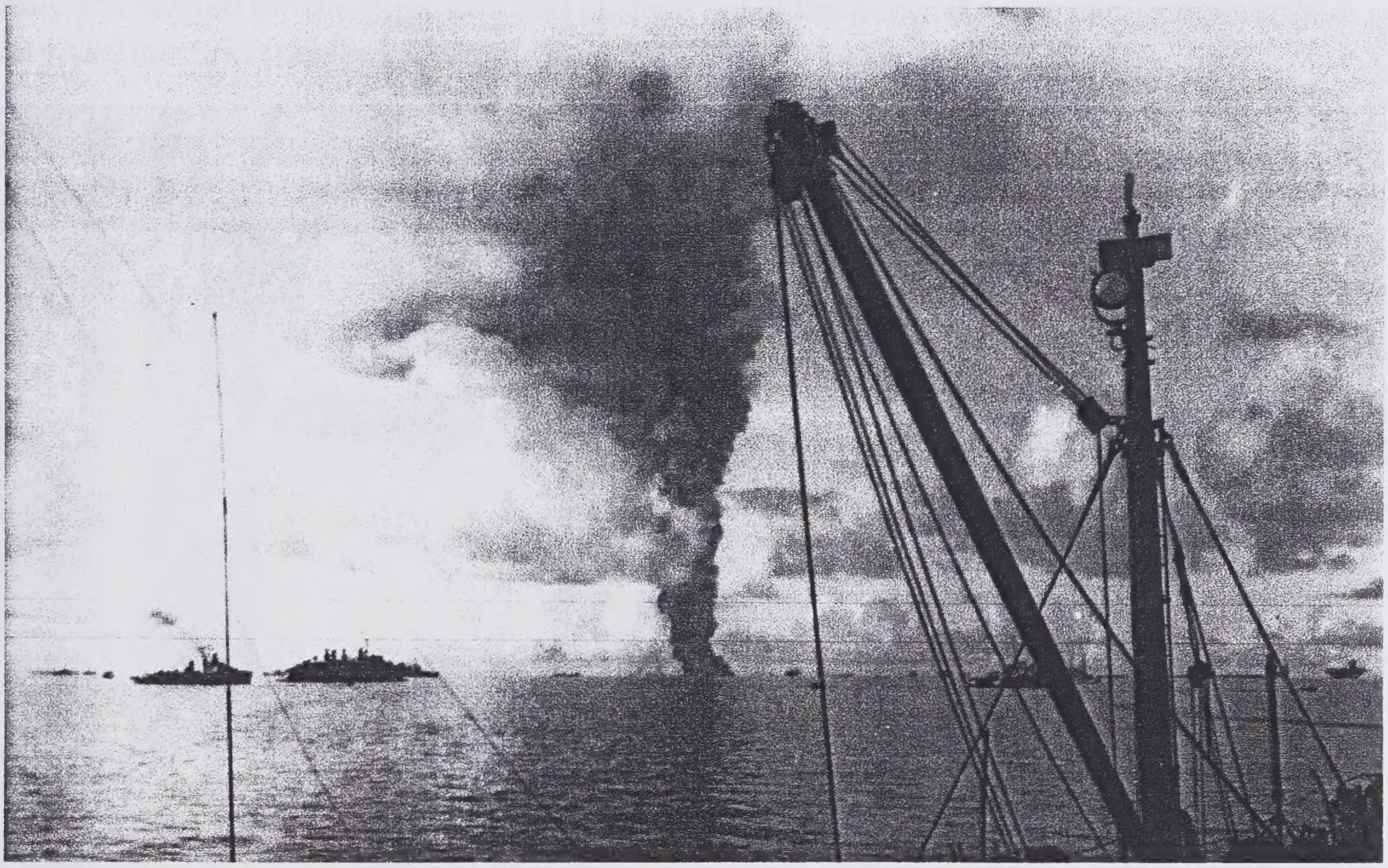
USS *Agenor* was one of 39 *Achelous*-class landing craft repair ships built for the United States Navy during World War II. Named for Agenor (in history and Greek mythology, a king of Tyre), she was the only U.S. Naval vessel to bear the name.

Originally projected as ***LST-490*** but re-designated **ARL-3** and named ***Agenor*** on 13 January 1943; she was laid down on 24 January 1943 by Kaiser Company, Inc. of Vancouver, Washington; launched on 3 April 1943; and commissioned at San Francisco, California on 20 August 1943, Lieutenant Argyle W. Markley in command.



To say she was a homely-looking ship would be kind. She had been modified so that her folding doors on the bow, a characteristic of a Landing Ship Tank (LST), were welded shut and an A-frame was built mid-ships. The A-frame Derek was to be used to lift landing craft onto her deck for repair, following beach invasions. Agenor's bottom was flat in order to drive up onto the sand and she only drew 11 feet for a ship of 328 feet in length with a 50-foot beam. These physical attributes made her an unusual-looking craft, which would not only attract undue attention from the Japanese Navy, but also save the men who served aboard. She was seaworthy, but uncomfortable in a sea. As she pointed her bow into the Pacific in the fall of 1943, her mission was determined; essential but unheralded. Happily, Agenor and her crew transited through Hawaii and on to the South Pacific islands before

the winter weather arrived. Smashing into waves and wallowing in the troughs; she was no sleek ship of the line. The allies had landed on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands on August 8, 1942. Several additional landings were made before the battle for the islands turned into a war of attrition. The Japanese attempts to re-supply their forces (known as the Tokyo Express by the allies) were met with resistance by the U.S. Navy, however the battles wore on for this strategic island group. The Japanese needed to protect their Southern flank and the Allies sought to maintain shipping lanes to Australia and New Zealand. The area North of Guadalcanal, previously known as Savo Sound, became known as "Ironbottom Sound". Agenor was steaming into a well-reported danger zone for her first engagements of the war. Arriving in the Solomon Islands in December 1943, she began her repair work for landing craft making invasions there, and subsequently in the Russell and Marshal islands through the middle of 1944.



On June 9th, the repair ship got underway for the Marianas and the island of Saipan. Eight days later, Japanese torpedo bombers attacked *Agenor's* convoy.

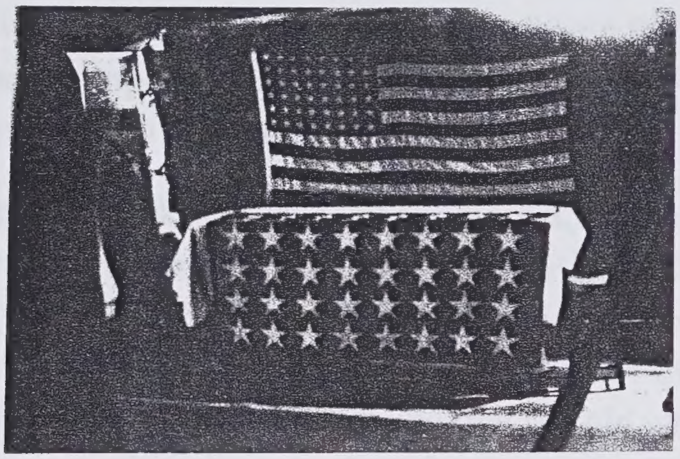
Lieutenant Sherman heard the rattle of the guns erupt shortly after the general quarters alarm began. From his sickbay post on the top deck of the ship he looked out the porthole at approaching Japanese torpedo bombers. Alarmingly, the planes swung toward Agenor, rather than the supply ships and escorts. Oh shit! The lead plane lined up on the porthole and made its run directly at the young lieutenant. As it leveled off and dropped its fish, Bob watched the torpedo's track head straight for his amidships position. When the white

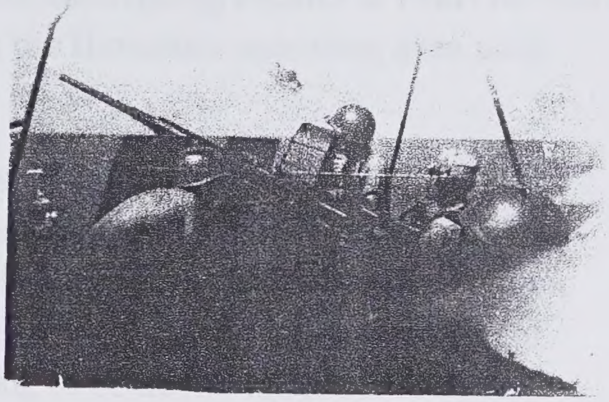
bubble track was within 100 yards, he braced for the impact by bending his knees, opening his jaw and covering his ears. The silence was eternal, and continued longer than expected. Realizing that there hadn't been an explosion, he rushed across to the other side of the sickbay to see the torpedo wake heading away from the ship. Surprised, and relieved, it struck that the Jap bombers had set their torpedoes to sink deeper draught ships. Agenor's eleven-foot depth had saved her.

The guns continued to fire, and the young doctor could hear shell casings clanging on the steel decks around him. His next concern was for any casualties that might have occurred in the attack. Shortly the hatch swung open and he was absorbed in treating the wounded. The Jap planes kept coming, with two more torpedoes sent swimming toward Agenor. Each time he could hear the crew yelling a warning when the fish hit the water. No longer could he afford to look out a porthole; but, rather braced himself over the patient on the table and waited for the explosion and up-heaving of the deck. It never came. Agenor had survived her first targeted assault.

Despite several near misses, the ship continued on safely to waters off Saipan where she arrived on the 24th of June. The invasion fleet had arrived nine days earlier, so *Agenor* was assigned duty with a salvage group, Task Group 52.7 (TG 52.7). While air raids were a constant threat, the vessel carried out her work successfully. By July 9th, the fighting on Saipan was substantially over for the invasion elements. On 15 July, she moved to Tinian to

supply services to invasion forces there, where the invasion and battle occurred from July 24, 1944 to the first of August.





The ship sailed to Guam in early August and reported to Task Force 53 (TF 53). That island was her base of operations through 2 October, when the ship shifted to Ulithi in the Carolines. The adjacent island of Mogmog would be developed as a fleet recreation center in the following year, but for the time the lagoon at Ulithi provided the crew of Agenor with a large safe harbor (larger than Pearl Harbor) and the opportunity to catch their breath.

Agenor returned to Guam on 10 February 1945 to prepare for the Iwo Jima landings.

On 20 February, the repair ship arrived off of Iwo Jima a day after the initial beach assault. Anchored off the invasion beach at Iwo Jima, Agenor was busy repairing landing craft five days after the landing on February 23, 1944. Earlier in the day the word had been passed that Mount Surabachi had been taken, and the operation was moving into a mop-up phase. A shout from a fellow officer called "Hey Doc, look up there; the Marines are ham' in up!" Bob picked up his binoculars in time to see a small group of marines raising the flag over the scarred mountain. He didn't fully appreciate the toil they had undertaken to achieve their objective, or the significance of the second flag raising. Within days news of the vicious fighting would make its way to the ship, along with the now famous picture of the Marines. Years later he told the story with self-deprecating humor. He saved published pictures of the flag raising, but had no recognition in the moment as to its significance or historical longevity.

Throughout her time at Iwo Jima, Agenor and Sherman would endure heavy seas and regular air attacks. The ship's unique A-frame derrick and unusual conformation seemed to attract the attention of the Japanese pilots. Her humble mission didn't warrant the unwanted attention; which became the subject of gallows humor by her crew. The carnage on the beach kept Agenor at Iwo Jima for over four months, with opportunities to go ashore and see the battlefield.

On June 25th, she then got underway for Saipan, where she dropped anchor on the 29th. Soon after reporting to Service Squadron 10 for duty, *Agenor* left Saipan bound for Hawaii and a much-needed overhaul. The vessel reached Pearl Harbor on 18 July and entered the navy yard. The Japanese surrender found the ship still undergoing repairs at Pearl Harbor. Upon completion of the yard work, *Agenor* served in the Hawaiian operating area until returning to the states.

Arriving back stateside in San Pedro, California, the crew of Agenor was released from service except for a skeleton crew of regular Navy mechanics. Sherman was held at the Naval hospital for an additional six months to assist in departure physical examinations. On November 13, 1945 the phone rang; it was the chief of the NCO's calling Lieutenant Sherman. "Hey Doc, you know that the old girl is going to be decommissioned day after tomorrow? Well, we're rounding up anyone we can for a party tomorrow night. Meet at the ship at six and then we'll go to dinner at our favorite Italian place."

Sherman arrived at Agenor in the Navy yard on time to be greeted by the sailors bristling with wrecking tools. Puzzled by this, he inquired as to all the equipment on hand. "Doc, the tradition is that when a ship is taken out of service, the men who served on her can take a non-essential souvenir. You're the senior officer here so you get first pick. We'll get it for you; so what do you want? After thinking for a moment, Sherman said "the bell". All of a sudden the men dug deep into soiled work pants and wads of bills emerged and traded hands. There were smiles and grimaces; apparently his decision was the subject of some side-bets. A few minutes later a Chief Petty Officer came down the gangplank with the ship's bell. Sherman would install the bell with great pride in Alpine Meadows and Tiburon, where it resides today at his son's home.

October 18, 2010

STRATEGY & STATISTICS – Robert S. McNamara:

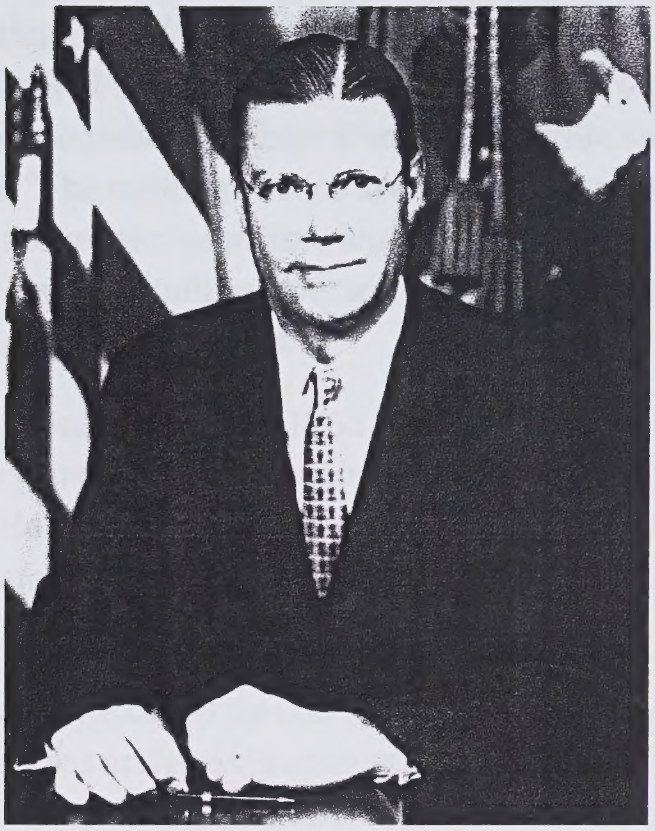
Robert McNamara graduated in 1937 from the University of California, Berkeley, with a Bachelor of Arts in economics with minors in mathematics and philosophy. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa his sophomore year and earned a varsity letter in crew. He then earned an MBA from the Harvard Business School in 1939.

After earning his MBA, McNamara worked for a year at Price Waterhouse in San Francisco, before returning to Harvard to teach accounting as the highest paid and youngest Assistant Professor at that time. While at Harvard, he worked in a program to teach analytical approaches used in business to officers of the Army Air Forces (AAF). With the outbreak of war McNamara entered the Armed Forces as a captain in early 1943, serving most of World War II with the AAF's Office of Statistical Control. One major responsibility was the analysis of U.S. bombers' efficiency and effectiveness in Japan, China and (ironically) the Mariana Islands (where Sherman was serving). He left active duty in 1946 with the rank of lieutenant colonel and with a Legion of Merit.

In 1946 McNamara joined Ford Motor Company owing to the influence of Charles "Tex" Thornton, a colonel for whom he had worked while in the military. He was one of ten former World War II officers known within Ford as the "Whiz Kids" who helped the company to stop its losses and administrative chaos by implementing modern planning, organization and management control systems. Starting as manager of planning and financial analysis, he advanced rapidly through a series of top-level management positions.

On November 9, 1960, McNamara became the first president of Ford from outside the family of Henry Ford. He received substantial credit for Ford's expansion and success in the postwar period.

After his election in 1960, President-elect John F. Kennedy first offered the post of Secretary of Defense to former secretary Robert A. Lovett; Lovett declined but recommended McNamara. Kennedy then sent Sargent Shriver to approach him regarding either the Treasury or the Defense cabinet post less than five weeks after McNamara had become president at Ford. McNamara immediately rejected the Treasury position but eventually accepted Kennedy's invitation to serve as Secretary of Defense.



Although not especially knowledgeable about defense matters, McNamara immersed himself in the subject, learned quickly, and soon began to apply an "active role" management philosophy, in his own words "providing aggressive leadership questioning, suggesting alternatives, proposing objectives and stimulating progress." He rejected radical organizational changes and accepted the need for separate services but argued, "At the end we must have one defense policy, not three conflicting defense policies. And it is the job of the Secretary and his staff to make sure that this is the case."

According to Special Counsel Ted Sorensen, Kennedy regarded McNamara as the "star of his team", calling upon him for advice on a wide range of issues beyond national security, including business and economic matters." McNamara became one of the few members of the Kennedy Administration to work and socialize with Kennedy, and he became so close to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy that he served as a pallbearer at the younger Kennedy's funeral in 1968.

Initially, the basic policies outlined by President Kennedy in a message to Congress on March 28, 1961, guided McNamara in the reorientation of the defense program. Out of a major review of the military challenges confronting the United States initiated by McNamara in 1961 came a decision to increase the nation's "limited warfare" capabilities. These moves were significant because McNamara was abandoning President Dwight D. Eisenhower's policy of massive retaliation in favor of a flexible response strategy that relied on increased U.S. capacity to conduct limited, non-nuclear warfare.

He also created the Defense Intelligence Agency in 1961 and the Defense Supply Agency.

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The Kennedy administration placed particular emphasis on improving ability to counter communist "wars of national liberation", in which the enemy avoided head-on military confrontation and resorted to political subversion and guerrilla tactics. As McNamara said in his 1962 annual report, "The military tactics are those of the sniper, the ambush, and the raid. The political tactics are terror, extortion, and assassination." In practical terms, this meant training and equipping U.S. military personnel, as well as such allies as South Vietnam, for counterinsurgency operations.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 McNamara served as a member of EXCOMM and played a large role in the Administration's handling and eventual defusing of the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was a strong proponent of the blockade option, over a missile strike, and helped persuade the Joint Chiefs of Staff to agree with the blockade option.

Increased attention to conventional strength complemented these Special Forces preparations. In this instance he called up reserves and also proceeded to expand the regular armed forces. Whereas active duty strength had declined from approximately 3,555,000 to 2,483,000 between 1953 (the end of the Korean conflict) and 1961, it increased to nearly 2,808,000 by June 30, 1962. Then the forces leveled off at around 2,700,000 until the Vietnam military buildup began in 1965, reaching a peak of nearly 3,550,000 by mid-1968, just after McNamara left office.

During President John F. Kennedy's term, while McNamara was Secretary of Defense, America's troops in Vietnam increased from around 500 to 16,000 advisers, who were not supposed to engage in combat but rather to train the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

The Vietnam conflict came to claim most of McNamara's time and energy. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations had committed the United States to support the French and native anti-Communist forces in Vietnam, though neither administration established actual combat forces in the conflict. The U.S. role, initially limited to financial support, military advice and covert intelligence gathering, expanded after 1954 when the French withdrew. During the Kennedy administration, the U.S. military advisory group in South Vietnam steadily increased, with McNamara's concurrence, from just a few hundred to about 17,000. U.S. involvement escalated after the Gulf of Tonkin Incident in August 1964 when North Vietnamese naval vessels were falsely reported as firing on two U.S. destroyers. McNamara was instrumental in presenting this event to Congress and the public as a pretext for escalation.

President Johnson ordered retaliatory air strikes on North Vietnamese naval bases and Congress approved almost unanimously the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, authorizing the president "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the U.S. and to prevent further aggression."

In 1965, in response to stepped up military activity by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam and their North Vietnamese allies, the United States began bombing North Vietnam, deployed large military forces and entered into combat in South Vietnam. McNamara's plan, supported by requests from top U.S. military commanders in Vietnam, led to the commitment of 485,000 troops by the end of 1967 and almost 535,000 by June 30, 1968. The casualty lists mounted as the number of troops and the intensity of fighting escalated. McNamara put in place a statistical strategy for victory in Vietnam. He concluded that there were a limited number of Viet Cong fighters in Vietnam and that a war of attrition would destroy them. He applied metrics, in the form of "body counts" to determine how close to success his plan was.

Although he was a prime architect of the Vietnam War and repeatedly overruled the Joint Chiefs on strategic matters, McNamara gradually became privately skeptical about whether deploying more troops to South Vietnam and intensifying the bombing of North Vietnam could win the war. He traveled to Vietnam many times to study the situation firsthand and became increasingly reluctant to approve the large force increments requested by the military commanders.

McNamara said that the Domino Theory was the main reason for entering the Vietnam War.

(Liberally paraphrased from Internet sources)

October 18, 2010

After “The War” - Vietnam

Bob Sherman had not stayed in touch with his college roommate after graduating from Cal, attending medical school at UCSF and enlisting in the Naval Reserves. Return to civilian life saw the young doctor delving into medical applications of radiation for both diagnostic and therapeutic uses. On a multi-year fellowship at the Royal Marsden Cancer Hospital in London, he met Alice Towne, who had grown up on Pacific Avenue a few blocks from his parents’ home on Vallejo St. in San Francisco. They met at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, and fell in Love for life.

By the mid-1960’s, the Sherman household, with two pre-teen sons and an older and younger daughter; was a busy and boisterous place. Bob and Alice enjoyed regular family dinners; encouraging their brood to discuss whatever was on their minds. Sitting at the old Navy table on Jackson St., the conversation turned to the war in Vietnam. Was it necessary? How could America win it? The boys argued over strategy and gung-ho tactics, while their mother emphasized her fear of the domino effect of communism. Though the daughters weren’t deeply involved in the conversation, as it progressed it became clear to all that Dad had gotten quiet and pensive. Referencing Hitler’s march into Austria, when she was a student in Switzerland, their mother drove the family into a fearful mood. The successes of the North Vietnamese, with the resources of still-closed China, made the future of Southeast Asia seem in question.

As the boys aggressively explained their under-informed opinions on how to win in Vietnam, Bob leaned over his placemat and began to enter the conversation. “The problems with this” he said “is that the country isn’t united as we were in World War Two and I’m not sure those guys in Washington know what they’re doing”. “Huh?” thought the boys. They knew a lot about the protests going on, and had been caught in one outside Grace Cathedral when Dean Rusk was speaking at the Fairmont, but Dad’s ambivalence about Washington was a surprising remark. Where the hell did that come from? He had always been such a loyal and patriotic father. He’d been in the Pacific, though didn’t talk about it much, and never had expressed an opinion to the family contrary to full faith in the country’s leadership.

The mood over the cleaned plates shifted. Alice became edgy, the girls anxious, and the boys nervously attentive. Intrigued, but cautious, they looked at their father to see if he would continue. This was all new. There was a strong sense that they were all being treated as more grown-up in the moment. Dad had moved beyond the normal tone of the family dynamic. Responding to the unease and questioning eyes, Bob continued, “I roomed with McNamara in the Fiji house, he’s arrogant; really smart, but maybe too convinced of his own opinion. I don’t know whether they know what they’re doing in Washington.

Doesn't look like they do, and he'd be the last to admit it. Lyndon Johnson is a big government democrat and McNamara's never been in a war. He sat the last one out in Washington. They think they can pile on more young men and equipment, but it's not working. It's a different kind of war; a long way from the planning. I don't know if you can believe them any more. It's not right, you should understand, your cousins are in the service and they are the ones who are getting killed, much less the guys who've gotten drafted because they aren't in college or too poor to know how to get out of it." Stunned silence all around. This was the first time Bob had ever expressed doubt in America to his children, and the revelation that he actually knew someone in Washington (much less McNamara) was both a surprise and an announcement that destroyed the boys' comic book and "evening-news" knowledge of war.

Bob Sherman was gung-ho; though didn't discuss his experiences in the war to any great extent. It was troubling to the boys to hear his ambivalence; he had always stressed love of country. As the years progressed, they would come to better understand this mild man who spent a dozen hours a day at the hospital. Visiting his cancer patients, and meeting them in public, the family would come to appreciate how revered he was in the community. The burdens he shouldered without comment took their toll on him though he persevered with a quiet and humble determination. The boys enjoyed his involvement with their scouting adventures, and the family operated as a cohesive group in all its activities, especially sailing on the Bay. Bob was a softy. Over Alice's objections, he would always let a child with a nightmare into his side of the bed, and he regularly held back a piece of bacon on his weekend breakfast plate for each of the family dogs. Nonetheless, there was always a big part of Bob's life that remained his alone.

What they didn't know that they didn't know:

In the mid-1990's, Robert McNamara was interviewed for two documentaries, and wrote a book (with James G. Blight) titled Wilson's Ghost: Reducing the Risk of Conflict, Killing, and Catastrophe in the 21st Century . From these works came McNamara's eleven lessons of war, which he noted are generally about war, but not a specific war.

The Eleven Lessons Are:

1. Empathize with your enemy
2. Rationality will not save us
3. There's something beyond one's self
4. Maximize efficiency
5. Proportionality should be a guideline in war
6. Get the data
7. Belief and seeing are often both wrong
8. Be prepared to re-examine your reasoning
9. In order to do good, you may have to engage in evil
10. Never say never
11. You can't change human nature

Applying these to the Vietnam War in his book *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (1995), McNamara says:

1. We misjudged then — and we have since — the geopolitical intentions of our adversaries ... and we exaggerated the dangers to the United States of their actions.
2. We viewed the people and leaders of South Vietnam in terms of our own experience ... We totally misjudged the political forces within the country.
3. We underestimated the power of nationalism to motivate a people to fight and die for their beliefs and values.
4. Our misjudgments of friend and foe, alike, reflected our profound ignorance of the history, culture, and politics of the people in the area, and the personalities and habits of their leaders.
5. We failed then — and have since — to recognize the limitations of modern, high-technology military equipment, forces, and doctrine. We failed, as well, to adapt our military tactics to the task of winning the hearts and minds of people from a totally different culture.
6. We failed to draw Congress and the American people into a full and frank discussion and debate of the pros and cons of a large-scale military involvement ... before we initiated the action.

7. After the action got under way, and unanticipated events forced us off our planned course ... we did not fully explain what was happening, and why we were doing what we did.
8. We did not recognize that neither our people nor our leaders are omniscient. Our judgment of what is in another people's or country's best interest should be put to the test of open discussion in international forums. We do not have the God-given right to shape every nation in our image or as we choose.
9. We did not hold to the principle that U.S. military action ... should be carried out only in conjunction with multinational forces supported fully (and not merely cosmetically) by the international community.
10. We failed to recognize that in international affairs, as in other aspects of life, there may be problems for which there are no immediate solutions ... At times, we may have to live with an imperfect, untidy world.
11. Underlying many of these errors lay our failure to organize the top echelons of the executive branch to deal effectively with the extraordinarily complex range of political and military issues.

McNamara also stated later that his support of the Vietnam War was given out of loyalty to administration policy. He also said, "Kennedy hadn't said before he died whether, faced with the loss of Vietnam, he would [completely] withdraw; but I believe today that had he faced that choice, he would have withdrawn".

Only Robert McNamara knew whether this was true, or revisionist recollections.

As to Bob Sherman...

As Vietnam wound down, Bob Sherman was diagnosed with brain cancer and began an eighteen-year war of his own. Discussions of regional insurrections and Washington politics faded into the background as the family faced a more near-term and deadly foe. Gone were the debates and the appetite to argue among themselves.

What he would never know was that McNamara had his own misgivings about Vietnam while he was Secretary of Defense. Nor would he know the toll that the Vietnam War took on McNamara's family life. His wife and children were opposed to the war that he directed under the Johnson and Kennedy administrations. The stress became so great for his family that his wife Margaret and teenage son both contracted painful stomach ulcers.

As a particularly empathetic physician, Bob Sherman would have been alarmed to know that the stomach ulcers kept Craig McNamara from serving in Vietnam. He would have been saddened to know that the young McNamara dropped out of Stanford, but pleased that he ultimately graduated from U.C. Davis in 1976 with a degree in soil science.

Much of what is now known about Robert McNamara's service as Secretary of Defense was not known to the general public at the time; certainly not to his college roommate. Bob Sherman never knew that in November 1967, McNamara's recommendation to freeze troop levels, stop bombing North Vietnam and for the US to hand over ground fighting to South Vietnam was rejected outright by President Lyndon B. Johnson. McNamara's recommendations amounted to his saying that the strategy of the United States in Vietnam had failed. What Sherman did know was that the President's announcement of McNamara's move to the World Bank stressed his stated interest in the job and that he deserved a change after seven years as Secretary of Defense.

Whether or not Bob Sherman knew the details of McNamara's life, he did know that his had produced a family instilled with love and tempered with adversity. He probably never knew how his war experiences had forged a seriousness about world events that he passed along to his children, along with the unbridled love and affection he demonstrated to his family.

Robert McNamara and Bob Sherman never met after they went their separate ways in 1937. Two very different lives lead by bright well-educated men. They might have appreciated a discussion in later life, but that was not to be.

Robert S. Sherman, Jr. passed away on May 31, 1988, following a convivial Memorial Day weekend with his children and grandchildren.

Robert S. McNamara passed away on July 6, 2009. His son Craig (with whom he reconciled) now lives in Winters, California where he farms organic walnuts and leads The Center for Land Based Learning.

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